

The Consequences of Eating With Men

Hawaiian Women and the Challenges of Cultural Transformation

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Summary

Before 1819 Hawaiian society was ruled by a system of ritual laws called kapu. One of these, the aikapu (sacred eating), required men and women to eat separately. Because eating was ritual, some food items, symbolically associated with male deities, were forbidden to women. It was believed that women had a “haumia” (traditionally translated as “defiling”) effect on the male manifestations of the divine and were, as a consequence, barred from direct worship of male gods and work tasks such as agriculture and cooking. In Western history writing, Hawaiian women always presented a certain paradox. Although submitted to aikapu ideology, that was considered devaluing by Western historians, women were nevertheless always present in public affairs. They engaged in the same activities as men, often together with men. They practised sports, went to war and assumed public leadership roles competing with men for power. Ruling queens and other powerful chiefesses appear frequently in Hawaiian history, chants and myths. The Hawaiians did not seem to expect different behaviour of men and women, except perhaps in ritual contexts. Rank transcended any potential asymmetry of genders and sometimes the highest-ranking women were considered above the kapu system, even the aikapu.

In 1819, after 40 years of contact with the foreigners, powerful Hawaiian queens decided to abolish the kapu system, including the aikapu. They proclaimed that they wished Hawaiians to live like the foreigners and they publicly dined with men. Free eating, or ainoa, became a metaphor for all foreign ideas that were adopted. Many Western historians believe that the abolition of kapu was an act of emancipation, but the idea of hierarchy between men and women was introduced with Christianity. The missionaries tried to teach Hawaiian women submissiveness and correct their perceived “masculine” behaviour to fit with the expectations of Western femininity. Despite these efforts, Hawaiian women never really left the arena of public life and constantly opposed the dominant ideology of Western powers. Given their strong position in the traditional society, Hawaiian women negotiated a transformed idea of femininity within the imposed system of values. Their struggle was not against the native gender structures, but the patriarchal structure of Western colonialism. Today Hawaiians strive for sovereignty and preservation of their values and women are among the most prominent leaders of the revival and sovereignty movement either as artists, scholars or activists. Hawaiian female scholars proclaim that they do not need Western feminism, since they have never lost gender equality within the native society.

A tiny introduction to Hawaii

“For the First World, the Pacific archipelagoes are filled with tiny fantasy islands more reflective of a “state of mind” than an actual geographic and cultural place.”¹

Geographically the Hawaiian Islands are the northernmost point of the Polynesian group. Today there are seven inhabited islands, Hawai‘i (also called Big Island), Māui, Lana‘i, Moloka‘i, O‘ahu, Kaua‘i and Ni‘ihau. The first Polynesian settlers are said to have arrived there from the Marquesas. Another group of immigrants came probably from Tahiti. Among the latter the high priest Pa‘ao is said to have arrived and he brought a new strict set of religious rules and greater division of classes.² Hawaiian society in pre-contact times was rural. There were no large villages like in other Polynesian cultures. Each island was divided in ahupua‘a-sectors, with each sector having a coastline and an inland part with access to fresh water. This division of land gave the group of people inhabiting an ahupua‘a both fishing and agricultural grounds. Most of the cultivated plants, for example banana, coconut, sweet potato, breadfruit and the many varieties of taro were brought to the islands by the first settlers. Taro, kalo in Hawaiian, was the staple food. Polynesian settlers also brought domestic animals, such as pigs, chickens and dogs to their new home. Hawaiians had a sophisticated agricultural system with terraced and irrigated fields of taro. In addition to fishing in the ocean they also built walled fish-ponds. The native crafts included luxurious feather cloaks worn only by the chiefs, plaited mats, various types of tapa cloth made of bark, woodcrafts, weapons, other feather work (images of gods and helmets) and canoes. Hawaiians built houses with walls of thatched grass and terraced stone temples. Their literature was oral and consisted of historical chants, stories, songs and myths. Their science and knowledge included the art of navigation, healing and agriculture. The hierarchy of the society was maintained by the ritual kapu system that divided the sacred chiefs (ali‘i) from commoners (maka‘ainana).³

¹ Trask 1999, p. 41

² Kane 1997, p. 16-18

³ McGregor 2002, p. 338 and Kane 1997, p. 31 and 56-110

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The photograph on the cover: Kūkaniloko, the sacred birthplace of the chiefs in Wahiawā

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1. Introduction

The controversy of gender hierarchy

Prior to 1819, Hawaiian society was governed by the kapu laws. It was a system of ritual rules that applied to most aspects of life. One of these laws, the 'aikapu, commanded men and women to eat and work separately at most occasions. The foreign visitors often mentioned this exotic custom in their accounts. James King, one of the officers sailing with Captain Cook, noted about Hawaiian women:

“In their domestic life, they appear to live almost entirely by themselves, And though we did not observe any instances of personal ill- treatment, yet it was evident they had little regard or attention paid to them.”⁴

There are many other reports of this kind in which Hawaiian women are described as seemingly inferior and discriminated by the 'aikapu that forbade them to eat with men or enter the temples of male gods. In their journals, the foreign seamen often described themselves as liberators of their native mistresses. They believed that by eating with Hawaiian women and serving them the forbidden foods, they gave them freedom.⁵ It is no surprise then that early accounts and even some of the acknowledged modern studies of kapu system leave the reader with the impression that Hawaiian society was male dominated and women's role in public affairs was marginal.

However, historical and ethnological evidence shows at least many inconsistencies, or at most paradoxes in the practical enactment of such interpretation of 'aikapu ideology. Powerful female characters appear in native chants and myths as well as in records of the early explorers. Lilikalā Kame'eleihiwa, a prominent Hawaiian scholar, said in an interview about female leadership that: "in Hawaiian culture it is normal for women to run things"⁶. A rather strong statement opposing most Western historians who described the position of women in Hawaiian culture as inferior and even

⁴ Quoted in Linnekin 1990, p. vii

⁵ Sahlins 1981, p. 48-49

⁶ Walker 2005, <http://starbulletin.com/2005/09/25/news/index2.html>

“condemned by kapu to a hopelessly subordinate position”.⁷ Yet, in Hawaiian history female leaders or other “women of consequence”, as Joselyn Linnekin called them, appear quite frequently. Linnekin based her study of 19th century Hawaiian women on this presumable paradox and concluded that ‘aikapu did not effectively exclude women from public and political activity:

“In Hawaiian social organisation and gender relations, a major issue remains that of determining what in fact are the rules. Outside the context of the sacrificial religion and the tabu system, it is difficult to find support for the premise that Hawaiian women were considered inferior to men.”⁸

If ‘aikapu is defined as male oppression and dominance, too many “exceptions to the rule” appear. Linnekin reminds that “alternate practices are never random; they too have a pattern”.⁹ Kame‘eleihiwa argues that ‘aikapu was rather empowering not discriminating to women. The fact that women could not enter the temples of male gods also “excused” them from being used for human sacrifice. What in many analysis of kapu was earlier perceived as “female ritual impurity”, Kame‘eleihiwa interprets rather as the danger women’s spiritual power presented to men’s rituals.¹⁰

There is more to gender issues in Hawaiian history than just the ‘aikapu controversies. The social ideas of masculinity and femininity if such existed in the native society, were very different from the Western models at the time of Cook’s arrival. Hawaiian women did not behave in a manner that the European seamen expected to be feminine. Many accounts mention the “masculine” appearance and behaviour of the native women. “The blurred line between gender roles puzzled explorers”.¹¹ Hawaiian women’s aggressive sexuality was also perceived as un-feminine. “Philosophizing scientists attached to exploring expeditions were led to wonder whether feminine shame

⁷ Daws 1974, p. 57

⁸ Linnekin 1990, p. 5

⁹ Linnekin 1990, p. 5

¹⁰ Kame‘eleihiwa 2002, p. 8-9

¹¹ Green 2002, p. 323

was an inborn human attribute or merely a European trait.”¹² Many of these first visitors were impressed with the native people’s beauty and skill. Captain Cook described Hawaiians as “stoutly made” with “a considerable variation in their features, some of their visages not being very unlike those of Europeans”.¹³ He was apparently not among those impressed by native women’s attractiveness since he wrote about them that:

“Their size, color, and features did not differ much from those of the men; and though their countenances were remarkably open and agreeable, there were few traces of delicacy to be seen, either in their faces or other proportions.”¹⁴

Despite the harsh judgement of their appearances, he was apparently impressed by their swimming abilities:

“It was very common to see women, with infants at the breast, when the surf was so high that they could not land in the canoes, leap overboard, and without endangering their little ones, swim to the shore through a sea that looked dreadful.”¹⁵

Apparently “delicacy”, a desired quality in British ladies of Cook’s era, was not a Hawaiian ideal of femininity.

Christine Delphy proposed a theory that the idea of biological sex is socially constructed just as the modern idea of gender. The “naturalness” of the difference between human beings expressed as the division into two sexes is, as she argued, a result of applying cultural categories. The most interesting question raised by her was “why sex should give rise to any sort of social classification”. Even if the mystery of child bearing is great enough to trigger a “natural” classification of humans, then a new question “why it is not limited to the domain of procreation” arises, the division of labour and even hierarchy is often explained in context of sex. Her hypothesis is that the idea of gender

¹² Daws 1974, p. 45

¹³ Cook 1994, p. 2-3

¹⁴ Cook 1994, p. 5

¹⁵ Cook 1994, p. 8

precedes the idea of biological sex.¹⁶ Following, not only socially defined ideas of the feminine and masculine, but also the conceptions of what is “natural” for women and men, may be quite different in various cultures. Haunani-Kay Trask, a Hawaiian activist and feminist, claims that contemporary Hawaiian women do not need Western feminism and that Hawaiian women feel they have more in common with their men than with white foreigners of any sex.¹⁷ Perhaps Western feminism only applies to Western constructions of gender and sex. It may seem paradoxical to some that Hawaiian women were rulers and held other high political positions at the same time as they were subjected to the ‘aikapu ideology that by scholars has been labelled as devaluing. The existence of ‘aikapu ideology leaves no doubt that Hawaiians put an emphasis on biological sex differences. Whether these differences were considered symbolical only or whether, or how far, they extended into the social ideas of gender is an interesting question. Although Sahlins supports the idea that ‘aikapu devalued women, he wrote that this practise was the very system that defined women as women.¹⁸ Whether ancient Hawaiians had an idea of “natural” feminine and masculine traits besides the socially prescribed division of worship and work, or not, their gender system is not comparable to the Western one.

The controversy of the significance and praxis of ‘aikapu seems to originate in the assumption of universality of male and female “nature” as understood in the West. Hawaiian scholars do not seem to find the combination of ‘aikapu and female leadership paradoxical. Kamakau, a native 19th century historian, described the deeds of many chiefesses without ever finding the female exercise of political power unusual. Perhaps the native ideas of gender do not imply any hierarchy, which would explain the difficulties the missionaries experienced with teaching Hawaiian women submissiveness. The idea of gender hierarchy was introduced with Christianity.¹⁹ According to Linnekin “an examination of the cultural ethos and social position of Hawaiian women does undermine several of the distinctions central to ongoing debates in the gender

¹⁶ Delphy 2001, p. 415-416

¹⁷ Trask 2002, p. 255

¹⁸ Sahlins 1981, p. 52

¹⁹ Grimshaw 1989, p. 165-166

literature”.²⁰ Clearly, Hawaiian women do not easily fit into the established models of gender research.

The overwhelming foreign influences have changed many of the traditional native values and structures. Both religious and secular ideas of the Western societies have had an effect on the relations between Hawaiian men and women, especially the family structure. Just how deep change these values caused in the native mentality regarding the concepts of sex and gender is a very interesting question. The free eating may be seen symbolically as the act of actively adopting foreign ideas into Hawaiian culture. Kame‘eleihiwa states that the free eating “became a metaphor for changing any aspect of Hawaiian society”.²¹ Queen Ka‘ahumanu with the other royal widows of king Kamehameha decided in 1819 to abolish the kapu system through the symbolic act of eating with men in order to “live as the white people do”.²² This was one of the first great changes in Hawaiian culture, later Christianity was adopted and a foreign model of constitutional kingdom, followed by privatisation of land. What consequences did this metaphorical free eating have for the native ideas of sex and gender? Hawaiian women adopted Christianity, but did they become submissive wives like the missionaries taught them? Hawaiian princesses and other chiefly women were educated in boarding schools run by the foreigners, but did they ever become “proper” Victorian ladies? Today Hawaiian women still frequently assume various leadership roles either within academic fields, politics or on the local community level as teachers or activists. Linnekin believes that the Western ideas of hierarchy between men and women might never have been truly adopted by the Hawaiians, because Hawaiian women granted their strong position in the native society, managed to resist this particular effect of colonisation.²³

Reconstruction of the past

Hawaiian past is revealed to us through narratives of many kinds. There are various accounts such as histories, myths and sacred chants, genealogies and stories. The very

²⁰ Linnekin 1990, p. 4

²¹ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p. 83

²² Sahlins 1981, p. 63

²³ Linnekin 1990, p. 237-239

idea of history was very different in traditional Hawaii compared to the Western tradition. For Hawaiians it is genealogies that are history.²⁴ The language reveals also a different view on the ideas of the past and future. In Hawaiian the past is ka wā mamua, “the time in front or before”, the future on the other hand is ka wā mahope, “the time which comes after or behind”.²⁵ “We face the past, confidently interpreting the present, cautiously backing into the future, guided by what our ancestors knew and did.”²⁶ Interpreting the native language sources is complicated by the rich, multi-layered symbolism. Kaona, the ever-present device of Hawaiian literature, basically means “hidden meaning” or “double meaning”. Already in 1951, Martha W. Beckwith wrote that: “each year the difficulty of editing and translating becomes greater”. In her translation of Kumulipo she encountered problems with misspelled words and the archaic nature of the text. Many words were unknown to contemporary Hawaiians and some could not be interpreted correctly because their meaning was hidden as kaona. “A vivid description of natural scenes or activities, some mood of nature or inthrust of myth, may conceal an allusion recognized by the native listener but wholly misinterpreted by us of another culture who attempt translation.”²⁷ The power of language in traditional Hawaiian society is expressed by the saying: “in language is life, in language is death”.²⁸ Ironically, foreign interpretations and judgements of the native culture together with foreign translations of native texts have proven this proverb quite true.

Despite the efforts of native Hawaiian historians of 19th century, such as Malo and Kamakau, and foreign historians, such as Fornander, to record the stories, chants and myths, much of the indigenous literature from the times before Cook’s arrival, is lost. The parts that have been preserved, either in writing or orally, now serve as main sources of our knowledge about Hawaiian past. These accounts are, however, not flawless. Many who recorded the ancient traditions never actually observed them, others were influenced by foreign ideas and so were their records. The documented practices on one of the

²⁴ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p. 19

²⁵ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p. 22 (Kame‘eleihiwa’s translation)

²⁶ Osorio 2002, p. 7

²⁷ Beckwith 1981, p. 37-39

²⁸ Trask 1999, p.142

islands are today often used to represent the whole of ancient Hawaiian culture, but we do not always know if the practices described were the same on other islands.

Trask, and also Kame‘eleihiwa argue that native sources and “versions of the story” are overlooked by foreign historians both because of the inability to read Hawaiian and because they do not consider native texts valuable.²⁹ Another problem is the appearance of the native sources in translation and editing. In missionary accounts of Hawaiian myths and stories, but also in the accounts of other foreigners, the significance of women seems diminished. Native texts (original chants and stories) show a different reality. One of the reasons why Hawaiian women might appear less significant in foreign sources is the way these are written. This “silence” of the female voice is most often found in the Western-written histories. Hawaiian sources, on the other hand, such as myths, histories, newspaper publications, chants and genealogies grant both female and male voices equal strength. It would seem that Hawaiians were originally “ignorant” of the, seen from a Western point of view, “inappropriateness” of female presence in public spheres. Often during the translation into English, parts of the native texts were edited, either because they were considered inappropriate or insignificant for some reason. The writings of Samuel Kamakau, a native 19th century historian, are a typical example of such editing. Noenoe Silva, a modern native scholar, explored the extent and consequences of these alterations. Kamakau’s history was originally published as a series of articles in a Hawaiian language newspaper and was written depending on native sources, such as chants and stories. The translated book is based on these articles, but is also edited to better fit Western historiography model. Among the many changes, the account of the arrival of Captain Cook has been emphasised in the English edition while the original native text mentions this event as a minor matter in the longer narrative about the ruling chiefs of the time.³⁰ The accounts of extensive voyages made by Hawaiians before the arrival of Captain Cook and especially parts about female voyagers are left out in the English translation. According to Silva this leads the reader to believe that

²⁹ Trask 1999 and Kame‘eleihiwa 1992

³⁰ Silva 2004, p. 17-21

Hawaiian gender relations were similar to the Western ones and gives an “incomplete or even false picture of gender relations in the ancient culture”.³¹

The transformations of Hawaiian culture, political system and ideas of nationhood have been analysed from different angles depending mainly on the current methodological fashion in disciplines such as history and anthropology. Noel Kent analysed Hawaii’s economic history using the “dependency model” in order to explain why Hawaiian development was peripheral to that of the dominant culture.³² Gavan Daws, although he would probably never admit it, wrote a history of the foreigners in Hawaii, the native people and land being just scenery for the exciting events that took place the last two hundred years.³³ What many of histories written by foreigners have in common, is the view that ideological changes in Hawaiian society were either forcibly imposed or passively adopted. Another problem with foreigners writing about Pacific history is, as Greg Dening put it: “Stranger’s insistence that the Native perceptions should be literal, while the Stranger’s own perceptions are allowed to be metaphoric.”³⁴ He compared history-making to a theatrical performance in which presentation of a narrative is such performance. All kinds of storytelling and also history are coloured by the teller’s perception. “Our stories are as much about us as about something else” and so: “...histories – all the ways we transform lived experience into narratives - are metaphors of the past and metonymies of the present.” He concluded that: “these stories in their telling *are* our present”.³⁵ “Knowing the past, which we call history, and knowing the other, which we call anthropology, are the two great cultural metaphors by which we know ourselves and knowing ourselves constitute ourselves.”³⁶

Dening believed that “fatal impact” is unhelpful in describing cultural processes in Polynesia in stead he proposed that there was a kind of symbiosis between the native

³¹ Silva 2004, p. 21

³² Kent 1993

³³ Daws 1974

³⁴ Dening 1996, p. 139

³⁵ Dening 1996, p. 34

³⁶ Dening 1996, p. 200

people and the intruding Euro-Americans.³⁷ The Polynesians “possessed” the Strangers just as the Strangers “possessed” them. The mutual myth-making, history-making and the incorporation of each others artefacts and symbols into their own system was such “possessing”.³⁸ Marshall Sahlins had a similar idea of cultural change. He visualised the cultures as structures that changed as a result of attempted reproduction. Sahlins separated out the moment of interaction of two cultures and analysed it as the “structure of the conjuncture”. The foreign ideas adopted by Hawaiians did not simply replace the indigenous concepts, but were translated into the native system of values and resulted in the reordering of the culture:

“...the specificity of practical circumstances, people’s differential relations to them, and the set of particular arrangements that ensue (structure of the conjuncture), sediment new functional values on old categories. These new values are likewise resumed within the cultural structure...”³⁹

The reproduction of a structure became its transformation.⁴⁰ As a result of interaction with a foreign culture, the dynamics of the indigenous system itself trigger the transformation. The culture is not lost, but transformed on its own terms. According to Sahlins this applies not only to interaction of different cultures but also to competing ideas within the same culture.

Contradicting descriptions and colonial writing

There were different kinds of foreigners who came to Hawaii and they had different reasons for their coming. The first explorers mainly used the islands as the refreshment station. Some of the sailors settled in the islands. Later the merchants began arriving and cleared the way for the more systematic settlement. The missionaries came to Hawaii relatively late when the transformation of the traditional Hawaiian society was already happening. All of these groups of newcomers experienced Hawaii differently and their

³⁷ Denning 1996, p. 59

³⁸ Denning 1996, p. 166-167

³⁹ Sahlins 1981, p. 68

⁴⁰ Sahlins 1981, p. 8

descriptions vary much. The most interesting issue in the early writing about Hawaii and its people are the paradoxes within single accounts and the contradictions between the various writers. It is these paradoxes and differences that allow new interpretations of what the foreigners observed. The greatest differences exist between the writings of the explorers and missionaries. These two groups were of course looking for different and at different things, not to mention at different times. The foreigners were also writing for various Western audiences. Their descriptions of Hawaiian people reflect something of their own philosophies. Besides the limits of understanding caused by incomplete knowledge of the Hawaiian metaphors and social structure as well as poor fluency in the native language, the foreign writers experienced the limits in ability to explain their observations and experiences in terms of their own Western logic.

Patricia Grimshaw and Helen Morton discuss the implications of what they call “colonial writing” in their essay about the paradoxes in foreign sources about Maori women. Within a single account a writer might have presented a portrayal of a society in which women enjoy great influence in both the public and private life, but he, because most of these writers were male, would nevertheless argue the low status of the same women. Similar paradoxes exist in the early descriptions of Hawaiian people as well. Grimshaw and Morton believe that Western observers could not escape their Christian indoctrination concerning sexuality and the following idea that social status of a woman depends on her sexual purity.⁴¹ “These writers negotiated a constant, sharp tension between their empirical observations of Maori women’s lives and the social theory that informed their efforts to situate those observations within a comparative context.”⁴² It is worth notice that native historians, such as Samuel Kamakau and Davida Malo often wrote texts in which they contradicted themselves. As Christian converts and at the same time proud Hawaiians, they too experienced the tension between the ideology of the West and their native knowledge.

⁴¹ Grimshaw and Morton 2000, p. 273

⁴² Grimshaw and Morton 2000, p. 272

Polynesian women especially fascinated foreign visitors because of their sexual willingness. In her essay “Colonialism’s Daughters” Karina Kahananui Green explores how Western observers in 18th and 19th century perceived Hawaiian and Tahitian women. Western men in search of an ideal woman - beautiful, willing participant in physical love, not expecting moral love in return, would not get in the way of “natural man’s” need for independence. Tahitian women were considered beautiful and meek enough to fulfil this fantasy. But: “Her sea nymph image overrode any real encounter with her person. She was a lifeless stereotype, a mere male fantasy”.⁴³ Hawaiian women were considered less beautiful than their Tahitian sisters and too demanding in sexual matters. “The Hawaiian women’s attitudes had brought danger back into sex”.⁴⁴ The Hawaiian woman escaped therefore the Western stereotyping only as a sexual object but was instead perceived as somewhat “masculine” participating in dangerous sports and even warfare.

Karina Kahananui Green compares the European impressions of Tahitian and Hawaiian women to highlight the psychological background the foreign men had for these impressions. The Hawaiian women were perceived as less beautiful than their Tahitian sisters. The explorers also seemed disappointed by Hawaiian women’s power in sexual relations; several sailors experienced to be made fun of when they were unable to fulfil the demands of their mistresses. The very fact that Hawaiian women had demands in this sphere made them seem less attractive in Western eyes. The explorers remembered Tahitian women as sweet, innocent and rather submissive, which to them was the ideal of the female.

While the accounts of Tahitian women are very similar, the descriptions of Hawaiian women vary. Some of the foreigners were appalled by the perceived “masculinity” of Hawaiian women while others found it curious and described their observations with detail.⁴⁵ Green argues that the Tahitian women were perceived positively because their behaviour suited the patriarchal ideology of the explorers. The Hawaiian women challenged this ideology. “While the Tahitians were described as being preoccupied with the satisfaction of their partners, the Hawaiians were described as being

⁴³ Green 2002, p. 226

⁴⁴ Green 2002, p. 228

⁴⁵ Green 2002, p. 232-233

preoccupied with their own satisfaction.”⁴⁶ Not that this necessarily means that there existed such a great difference between these two Polynesian cultures, but this is how the explorers constructed it. The consequences of similar stereotyping of Pacific peoples are still problematic in history writing. As Dening stated, such interpretation is not the “Other”, “it is an invention that will have a cultural life of its own.”⁴⁷

Post colonial and post modern concerns

Earlier foreign historians, regardless of the fact whether they considered Hawaiians impressive or pity-worthy, seemed to agree that, to some extent Hawaiian culture was oppressive to women. Even in modern feminist history writing, the foreign view still seems very attached to the idea of sex hierarchy if only in symbolical context. Native feminists on the other hand believe that Hawaiian women were not only symbolically equal to men, but even in some contexts considered more powerful and dangerous. The ritual division of sexes is then seen rather as a matter of religious practice not symbolical valuation. Native texts in general, do not seem so preoccupied with the idea of hierarchy between the sexes, even if those written by Christian converts acknowledge the “wrongs” of the gender separation compared to the “better” Western model of family life. The availability of the native texts, as well as the interest in exploring them, was of course limited during the first period of contact with Hawaiians. Most of the judgements made about the native culture were based on observation and comparison with observers’ own standards. Many of the native stories were never written down and many of those that have are still not translated to English. Scholars fluent in Hawaiian have recently presented some of these “hidden” sources and debated the established assumptions about several of the aspects of native culture and history, among them the case of hierarchy between sexes. “No longer were Pacific Islanders content to allow the representations of themselves in print to be the preserve of foreigners.”⁴⁸

Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa argues that most of the literature written about history of Hawaii by Western scholars does not give proper explanation of Hawaiian metaphors and

⁴⁶ Green 2002, p. 228

⁴⁷ Dening 1996, p. 196

⁴⁸ Hereniko 1994, p. 413

even gives a wrong picture of the native system of values. She is relying on Denning's thesis that every society has its own metaphors that are only understood within that society. An observer, belonging himself to another culture, is only able to translate those metaphors into his own system of values, making a model. Many of those metaphors are hidden in the language and constructing such models is a dangerous task for a non-native speaker.⁴⁹ As Vilsoni Hereniko, a Rotuman scholar, stated about native people acquiring university education: "Now they had acquired the tools of their oppressors, they were suitably armed for psychological and intellectual combat."⁵⁰ According to Hereniko foreign literature displaced native oral literature as the writing was introduced. He believes that native people must "decolonize" their minds and reinstate Pacific poetry and stories in the definition of literature. "The written word has undermined the fluidity of indigenous stories. Oratory allowed for debate and negotiation."⁵¹ Another problem with undervaluing the orally transmitted knowledge is lack of credits to the native person. While the native informant reveals knowledge, the foreign researcher is the one who will later be cited by other academic researchers. According to Hereniko Western scholars should cite their oral sources in the same way as the written sources.⁵² Osorio believes that native knowledge should be treated as property, because the native people have the right to their knowledge.⁵³

Any speculations about how "natives think" or rather "thought", are of course the subject of native post-colonial critique. In her research of Hawaiian resistance to annexation, Noenoe Silva investigated a number of documents that were until recently buried and forgotten in the archives. These were mostly native petitions, written in Hawaiian, against the annexation. The Hawaiians were apparently not as politically passive as it appeared in some of the traditional Western histories of the islands. Also the assumed mistaking of Capt. Cook for the god Lono was re-analysed in a heated discussion between Marshall Sahlins and Gananath Obeyesekere. A native scholar

⁴⁹ Kame'eleihiwa 1992, p. 4

⁵⁰ Hereniko 1994, p. 414

⁵¹ Hereniko 2000, p. 83 -84

⁵² Hereniko 2000, p. 88

⁵³ Osorio 1993, <http://www.hawaii.edu/chs/osorio.html>

commented that Sahlins' book, "How Natives Think, About Captain Cook For Example?", a response to Obeyesekere's statements, should rather be called "How Anthropologists Think: about Polynesians, for Example"?⁵⁴

⁵⁴ quoted in Borofsky 2000, p. 438

2. Symbolism of sex and gender

From the source

According to Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa, “the telling of any Hawaiian history” should traditionally begin with giving a genealogical background.⁵⁵ Her book “Native Land and Foreign Desires”, being a Hawaiian history, logically begins with the retelling of the mythological beginning, first verses of a cosmology chant known as Kumulipo. Kumulipo can be translated as “source of deep darkness”.⁵⁶ The chant is divided in sixteen sections each representing a period of time, the first seven are called Pō the time of spirits (“night” or “darkness”) the remaining nine are called Ao the time of gods and humans (“day” or “light”).⁵⁷ Kumulipo consists of both the account of the beginnings and the genealogical succession of all life forms, including the lineages of gods and chiefs. Today this is the only known creation myth remaining, although there is reason to believe that there existed other cosmology chants since the translation of the title states that Kumulipo is “a creation chant” not “the creation chant”⁵⁸. These are the first verses of Kumulipo:

“At the time of changing, the earth was hot
At the time of changing, the heavens unfolded
At the time when the sun appeared in shadows
Causing the moon to shine
At the time when the Pleiades were seen in the night
When slime established the earth
At the beginning of the deep darkness
At the beginning of the night, only night
In the unfathomable dark blue darkness
In the darkness of the sun

⁵⁵ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p. 1

⁵⁶ Silva 2004, p. 97

⁵⁷ Beckwith 1981, p. 37

⁵⁸ Silva 2004, p. 103, when the chant was first published in Hawaiian the title was “He Kumulipo...”, which translates as “A Kumulipo...”

In the endless night
It was entirely night; night gave birth
Born to the night was Kumulipo (foundation of darkness), a male
Born to the night was Pō‘ele (the dark night), a female
Born from these two was the Coral Polyp”⁵⁹

Women as birth-givers

So according to Kumulipo, the creation of life begins when the night gave birth to the male and female element.⁶⁰ In Hawaiian tradition night and darkness symbolically signify the female and Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa has put special emphasis on the fact that the night gave birth all by herself without male assistance: “It is woman who creates the universe”⁶¹. This is a very feminist oriented interpretation of the myth, other studies explain the night and darkness of the beginning as nothingness, meaning that life appeared spontaneously⁶². Marshall Sahlins called the Pō period in Kumulipo “the long night of the world’s self-generation”⁶³. According to Martha Beckwith “the idea of a first cause in the person of an anthropomorphic deity presiding over creation is absent from the Hawaiian story”.⁶⁴ Although in “Hawaiian Mythology” Beckwith states that “through the woman must all pass into life in this world”⁶⁵ it is still not necessarily quite the same as creating the universe. The night being the source has nevertheless a many-layered meaning, a common Hawaiian expression describing wisdom or tradition of ancient origins is “mai ka pō mai”, meaning “from the night”, “from the beginning of time”⁶⁶ or “of divine origin”⁶⁷.

⁵⁹ Kame‘eleihiwa 2002, p. 2, Kame‘eleihiwa’s translation of Queen Lili‘uokalani’s version of the chant

⁶⁰ this translation: Kame‘eleihiwa 2002, p. 3

⁶¹ Kame‘eleihiwa 2002, p.3

⁶² Handy 1927, p. 9

⁶³ Sahlins 1995, p.22

⁶⁴ Beckwith 1981, p. 162

⁶⁵ Beckwith 1976, p. 13

⁶⁶ Kame‘eleihiwa 2002, p. 3

⁶⁷ Pukui and Elbert “Hawaiian Dictionary” 1986

Whether a female force actively or passively contributed to the creation of life, women or the female element were considered crucial in this process and in Hawaiian genealogies women are always listed alongside with men. The goddess Papa, under the name Papahānaumoku, was celebrated for giving birth to Hawaiian Islands.⁶⁸ According to Kumulipo, a woman was also responsible for giving the human race life on earth and genealogical seniority over gods. The oldest sister, La‘ila‘i took both her younger brothers as mates, but chose to have children with the youngest first, thus giving his offspring superior rank. Kāne the god was the oldest brother, Ki‘i the man was the youngest, according to Sahlins these names have a special significance; Kāne means “man” and Ki‘i means “image”, so “the first god is ‘man’ and the first human is ‘god’ (the image)”⁶⁹. This hierarchy is complicated by the fact that humans are still dependent on the gods for production and reproduction, because “the life-giving powers are divine”.⁷⁰ Human women became the mediators of these divine reproductive forces. “The older sister of god and man, La‘ila‘i is the firstborn and heiress of all the earlier eras of divine creation. She personifies the pivotal role of woman; she is uniquely able to transform divine into human.”⁷¹

The duality of symbolism

As Silva reminds in Hawaiian thought “Creation and reproduction of life require both male and female”⁷², in mythology and literature these two elements are elaborated further in a symbolical duality of all phenomena. Pairs of oppositions, or rather dual components of the whole, are found in chants, stories and even everyday speech as a “stylistic element” reflecting Hawaiian philosophy. Examples of such symbolic pairs are night and day, light and darkness, male and female, land and water, heaven and earth or descriptions of position such as up and down.⁷³ Several of these symbolic dualities have a

⁶⁸ Papahānaumoku means “Papa who gave birth to islands”

⁶⁹ Sahlins 1995, p. 23

⁷⁰ Sahlins 1995, p. 22

⁷¹ Sahlins 1995, p. 23

⁷² Silva 2004, p. 101

⁷³ Beckwith 1976, p. 3

parallel association to the duality of sex, male and female. The two hulls of a traditional Hawaiian canoe are imagined as a male and female with corresponding protective deities.⁷⁴ Women were symbolically associated with land, implying also being native while men were connected with the sky.⁷⁵ In chants and stories the kaona (hidden meanings) also reflect this symbolism, for example a pig rooting in a wet taro patch is a metaphor of mating, because the pig's snout is a symbol of the male organ and the moist earth represents female fertility.⁷⁶

Duality was very important in Hawaiian symbolism, but the symbolic pairs of phenomena were not necessarily valued in the same way as they are in Western culture. What seems to be the very paradise for anyone with a weakness for structuralism or universal explanations, might actually be a methodological trap. Handy's conclusion regarding the duality of symbolism in Polynesian cultures is a little self-contradicting. He divided the dual oppositions in "positive" designating "nature superior", the sacred, psychic, male, light and life; and "negative" or "nature inferior", common (not sacred), physical, passive, female, receptive, destructive, darkness and ignorance.⁷⁷ It is not clear how he managed to confirm that Polynesians really considered the one as positive and superior and the other as negative and inferior. According to Handy, in the Polynesian beliefs the "good gods" belonged to the "superior realm of nature" while the "evil spirits" belonged to "nature-inferior" and lived in or under the earth. This he used as part of his argument that women, associated symbolically with land and earth, were considered inferior to men who were associated with the "above".⁷⁸ According to him, the Polynesian concept of mana is associated with the "superior, good" side of nature although he stated a page earlier that mana can also be a destructive force. In addition he admitted that the Maori acknowledge mana of the female organ despite the fact that this statement literally contradicts his theory.⁷⁹ The missionaries were also tempted to

⁷⁴ Hawaiian Deities of Canoes, <http://pvs.kcc.hawaii.edu/builddeities.html>

⁷⁵ Linnekin 1990, p. 110-111

⁷⁶ Kame'eiehiwa 1996, p.19 (comments)

⁷⁷ Handy 1927, p. 37

⁷⁸ Handy 1927, p. 40-42

⁷⁹ Handy 1927, p. 34-35

translate Polynesian concepts of duality into symbolism of their own religion. They adopted the Hawaiian concepts of “ao” and “pō” through the terms “na‘auao” and “na‘aupō”, meaning civilisation and savagery. “Pō” does not have the same negative associations as “darkness” has in Christian symbolism, rather quite the opposite, in Kumulipo it is the period of gods and spirits, of the creation and origins. “Ao”, the time of humans, has little in common with Western concept of “enlightenment”.⁸⁰

It is interesting to note that despite the fact that Hawaiians acknowledged the duality of sexes, there are no female or male adjectives or articles in Hawaiian language⁸¹. Proper names are also androgynous. So while in English language assigning “a polarized male or female identity to every person” is necessary, for Hawaiians the “notion of gendered polarity or opposition is foreign”.⁸² On the other hand, the fusion of the male and female categories was possible. Persons called māhū may be said to represent a third category of gender and according to Robertson the “māhū embody the synthesis of the female/male principle in Hawaiian culture and cosmology”.⁸³ Originally this term applied only to hermaphrodites. Both men and women who were raised as the other sex and physical hermaphrodites fall under the definition of māhū. Apparently being a māhū did not disqualify a person from exercising full power granted by birth. According to a legend, in times of Pa‘ao, a māhū by the name Kauholanuiamāhū who was a child of the ruling chiefs, became a ruler too. Today modern forms of transvestism and homosexuality are some of the aspects of the māhū phenomenon as well, although in ancient times the ideas of sexual preferences were quite different and for example “feminine appearance or a soft voice was not considered evidence of homosexuality”.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Silva 2004, p. 99-101

⁸¹ he/she = ‘o ia, the same word for both sexes

⁸² Robertson 2002, p. 266, footnote 2

⁸³ Robertson 2002, p. 263

⁸⁴ Pukui 1979, Nana I Ke Kumu, vol II, p. 108-110

‘Aikapu

Kame‘eleihiwa nicely summarised the basic features of ‘aikapu as “the separation of male and female in labor, in cooking, in food, and in sacrifice”.⁸⁵ The mythical origin of gender separation is the story of Papa and Wākea, the ancestors of Hawaiian people. In other Polynesian myths Papa is the earth goddess and Wākea the sky god. In Hawaii, they represent the sacred ancestors of Hawaiian people. Their union also symbolises the marriage of a foreign high chief and a native chiefess. In the myth, Wākea fell in love with his daughter borne to him by Papa. A priest, Komoawa, helped Wākea in fulfilling his desires for the daughter by ordering special prayer nights when the wife and husband must be separated. The results of this both adulterous and incestuous union with a daughter were several human and non-human children, of which the first-born was the taro plant.⁸⁶ Because taro was the staple food in Hawaii, it is significant that genealogically it was considered an older sibling of humanity. The metaphor of incest is another important aspect of this myth, because incest was believed to create divinity and was practised among the high chiefs in order to conceive children of the highest rank.⁸⁷ Returning to the subject of ‘aikapu, as the result of Wākea’s love intrigue the tradition of separate eating and worship for men and women was established, because Papa agreed to the terms of the new cult practise.

Under ‘aikapu women were forbidden to eat certain foods, such as pork, coconut, red fish and bananas that were associated with male gods as well as eat with men or enter men’s eating houses. These foods were believed to be physical forms, kinolau⁸⁸, of the male gods (usually associated with their sexual organs). Women were believed to have a haumia effect (caused by menstruation) on the male gods and for that reason could not participate in their worship or enter their temples. Because eating was considered a communion with gods, men’s houses were also places of worship. Haumia is often translated as defiling or impure.⁸⁹ The fact that Hawaiian women could generally not

⁸⁵ Kame‘eleihiwa 2002, p. 7

⁸⁶ Beckwith 1976, p. 294- 297

⁸⁷ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p. 25 and 40

⁸⁸ “Many forms taken by a supernatural body”, Pukui and Elbert “Hawaiian Dictionary” 1986

⁸⁹ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p. 33-34

enter men's temples or participate in religious rituals of the male gods, also meant that they were unfit for human sacrifice, although they could be punished by death for violating the kapu. Kame'eleihiwa emphasises the fact that women could not become human sacrifice as one of the reasons for Hawaiian women to be content with 'aikapu. In addition all the cooking had to be done by men, because most of the food items were associated with male deities even if they were grown on symbolically female land.⁹⁰

The interpretations of 'aikapu as discrimination

Today the opinions are divided whether 'aikapu system was discriminating to women or not. Handy believed that kapu in Polynesia separated the divine as well as corrupt influences from the common. Kapu, according to him, signified both phenomena that were dangerous because of their divine, superior nature and also those that belonged to the inferior, polluting realm.⁹¹ Handy's explanation became a basis the traditional interpretation of 'aikapu as a system that devalued women on the grounds of their supposed ritual inferiority. Gavan Daws agreed with this idea and he summarised his views on the subject when he wrote about Hawaiian women as "members of the inferior sex, condemned by kapu to a hopelessly subordinate position in society".⁹² Other champions of the "inferiority theory", among them Valerio Valeri, interpreted the fact that women did not cook or participate directly in worship of male gods as exclusion from the public sphere and important work tasks.⁹³ The fact that women were not allowed to eat food items considered by the foreigners as "choicest", was also understood as discrimination. This interpretation may be illustrated by the reasoning of Captain Vancouver who brought a bull and a few cows as a gift for king Kamehameha. "To protect their numbers, he advised Kamehameha to place a ten-year tabu on them and suggested that women not be allowed to eat them."⁹⁴ Obviously, he understood the 'aikapu as a system of male domination where women were considered second-rank

⁹⁰ Kame'eleihiwa 2002, p 8-9

⁹¹ Handy 1927, p. 43

⁹² Daws 1974, p 57

⁹³ Linnekin 1990, p. VII

⁹⁴ Linnekin 1990, p. 161

citizens and not worthy to be allowed these foreign delicacies. Although the bull might be seen as a symbol of male attributes in earlier European mythologies, the same can not be said about the cows. I believe it is safe to assume that Vancouver was not aware of the Hawaiian connection between the kapu foods and male gods' kinolau. Linnekin points out that the kapu foods were considered "choicest" or "high status" in Hawaiian terms as well since most common people usually subsisted on fish and taro.⁹⁵ She argues however that 'aikapu ideology was not especially effective in restricting Hawaiian women's power and authority in public life. "Men's attempts to monopolize the sacrificial foods for their own gods through the eating kapu may have been the only domain in which women's efficacious power was more or less successfully negated."⁹⁶

Sahlins' view is more conservative, according to him the distinction between commoners and chiefs can be compared to the distinction between sexes, so "in terms of tabu, men were like chiefs, in opposition to women", because of their ritual status as "sacrifiers" even the commoner men were "domestic chiefs".⁹⁷ He believes that women who violated the 'aikapu expressed a resistance to such male domination. Women who visited the sailors aboard the ships of Captain Cook often indulged in eating the kapu foods in Western men's company when the danger of being caught was minimal. Apparently they seemed to be familiar with the taste of it as well. The explorers understood this as the evidence of the women's lack of approval for the kapu rules and they prided in seeing themselves as the liberators of these women, giving them the opportunity to live without what they understood to be absurd restrictions.⁹⁸ Sahlins argues that kapu "did not sit upon Hawaiian women with the force it had on men", because women could not be used as sacrifice and were punished by men rather than gods for their transgressions.⁹⁹ However, not all of the Hawaiian women that the foreign seamen encountered were willing to violate the 'aikapu. Despite the fact that chiefesses risked less severe punishments, if any at all, compared to commoners, they were usually

⁹⁵ Linnekin 1990, p 34-35

⁹⁶ Linnekin 1990, p 35

⁹⁷ Sahlins 1981, p. 52

⁹⁸ Sahlins 1981, p. 48-49

⁹⁹ Sahlins 1981, p. 46-47

unwilling to break the kapu rules which after all were part of the system that granted their elevated chiefly position.¹⁰⁰

Temporary suspension of 'aikapu was part of the mourning for a deceased chief, the new chief who came to power was expected to reinstate the kapu.¹⁰¹ The fact that Hawaiian women were no strangers to the taste of the forbidden foods does not necessarily mean that they had routinely violated the 'aikapu before the arrival of foreigners. During the conquest period that coincided with the "discovery" by Cook there were many opportunities to mourn for defeated chiefs and taste men's food.

The alternative interpretations of 'aikapu

Many who study gender relations in Hawaiian history argue that 'aikapu was not as restrictive as it originally seemed to Western eyes. They tend to see the division of sexes as a matter of lesser significance in the total evaluation of women's power. The kapu system is even by some interpreted as favourable to women. Kame'eleihiwa points to the double meaning of the word "ai" as both "to eat, devour" and "control, possess, rule". Because women were forbidden to eat certain foods symbolically connected to the cult of the male gods, she argues that the ban on those foods might have been a way of preventing women from acquiring the male mana, which would have made men's powers obsolete. So the female defiling, or rather interfering effect on the rituals could be seen as potential superiority rather than inferiority. 'Aikapu restrictions in this context would cause equality between male and female powers by diminishing the female mana to the level of men.¹⁰² She also defines the haumia effect of women as dangerous rather than polluting.¹⁰³ And most importantly, according to the story of the origin of 'aikapu, Papa actually willingly consented to the terms of Wākea's agreement. This consent is reported in the versions of the myth written by both Malo and Kamakau.¹⁰⁴ "Haumia applied only to situations where sacrifice to the male Akua was required and not to all other aspects of

¹⁰⁰ Linnekin 1990, p. 22-23

¹⁰¹ Silva 2004, p. 28

¹⁰² Kame'eleihiwa 1992, p. 34-36

¹⁰³ Kame'eleihiwa 1992, p. 25, 35 and Kame'eleihiwa 2002, p.8

¹⁰⁴ Kame'eleihiwa 1992, p. 35

life.”¹⁰⁵ Goddesses could be freely worshipped by women even during the period of menstruation.¹⁰⁶

Kame‘eleihiwa compares the ritualising of eating in Hawaii to ritualising of sexuality in European culture.¹⁰⁷ Following this line of thought, ‘aikapu could be understood as a kind of “culinary celibacy” comparable to the restrictions of monogamous marriage and in some degree to sexual celibacy in ritual contexts of Western religions. What makes Kame‘eleihiwa’s comparison interesting is the fact that the Europeans who came to Hawaii in the 18th century believed that their sexual ethics (as ideally practised at home, not in the “South Seas”) were an evidence of the high esteem their women enjoyed.¹⁰⁸

According to one of the modern interpretations presented by F. Allan Hanson, Polynesian women “had a special affinity with the gods and represented a conduit for the communication of influence between the physical and spiritual realms”.¹⁰⁹ The reason women were restricted in several ritual contexts was not because of their polluting nature, but rather because they attracted “the presence of godly influence” - as kapu state might be defined.¹¹⁰ Instead of earlier proposed “repellent thesis” in which Polynesian women, in Hanson’s case Maori women, were seen as repelling the gods because of their polluting nature a new “affinity thesis” is offered in which women channel the forces of human and spiritual world. Noa then may rather be defined as the absence of kapu, which is not necessarily the same as “profane”.¹¹¹ In accordance with this theory, female genitals were not “repulsive” and “polluting” to gods; rather the vagina was a “portal for the passage of influence of any sort from the world of atua into this one”.¹¹² In Maori beliefs menstruation was considered tapu but also referred to as “atua”, “Maori women

¹⁰⁵ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p. 35

¹⁰⁶ Kame‘eleihiwa 2002, p. 6

¹⁰⁷ Kame‘eleihiwa 2002, p.7

¹⁰⁸ Grimshaw and Morton 2000, p.273

¹⁰⁹ Hanson cited in Linnekin 1990, p. 34

¹¹⁰ Linnekin 1990, p. 27

¹¹¹ F. Allan Hanson discussed in Grimshaw and Morton 2000, p. 275

¹¹² Linnekin 1990, p. 27 (Hanson and Hanson cited)

did not merely contaminate but could effect a reversal of states”.¹¹³ Although in a different context, Sahlins too confirms that Polynesian women had this special ability:

“Women in general mediated between tabu and noa in such activities as birth, which was a transformation divine to human; chiefly women were means of transfer of royal tabus between lines – a movement from noa to tabu for the ennobled lineage – as well as the principal actors in important rites for terminating temple ceremonies – a movement from tabu to noa.”¹¹⁴

Linnekin finds it difficult, despite Hanson’s “affinity thesis”, to accept that Hawaiian women were not devalued by ‘aikapu “if only in the context of eating”, although she does admit that: “Hanson’s interpretation does much to mitigate the apparent contradiction between women’s ideological valuation and social efficacy in Polynesia”.¹¹⁵ Still her conclusion is that “symbolic devaluation is not synonymous with subordination” and women were able to exercise a great deal of power and influence despite the ritual restrictions.¹¹⁶ Women’s status in the society was not necessarily lower since there seems to be no evidence of discrimination in other areas of life than religion.¹¹⁷ And whether women felt discriminated by ‘aikapu is a question of subjective understanding. Most commoners of both sexes usually lived on a diet of fish and taro while the foods prohibited to women were usually reserved for chiefs and therefore not available to common men either.¹¹⁸ The participation in rituals in greater temples attached to the cult of the male gods, such as Kū and Lono, was also permitted only to the chiefs. According to Linnekin, ‘aikapu might have contributed as one of the factors that made Hawaiian women so consequential both in politics and within their families. “The logic of the kapu system, under which men and women did not eat together and for the most part lived apart, allowed women considerable freedom of action in practise.”¹¹⁹

¹¹³ Linnekin 1990, p.27

¹¹⁴ Sahlins 1992, p. 73, footnote 30

¹¹⁵ Linnekin 1990, p. 34

¹¹⁶ Linnekin 1990, p. 34

¹¹⁷ Linnekin 1990, p.5

¹¹⁸ Linnekin 1990, p. 35

¹¹⁹ Linnekin 1990, p. 55

The ‘aikapu did not apply to all women with equal strictness. High-ranking women usually escaped the consequences of breaking kapu. And it seems also that chiefly women observed the ‘aikapu in greater degree because their high position was partly granted by the same religious system.¹²⁰ Some of the high-ranking women were considered so sacred that usual rules of kapu were altered. Kalaniakua, who was a chiefess of almost divine rank, was allowed to walk around in the temples of the most important male gods.¹²¹ According to Kamakau, chiefs and chiefesses of the most sacred rank had the authority parallel to gods and could release the kapu, and women belonging to this highest chiefly class could enter the temples and eat sacrificial food, even the items that were otherwise forbidden to all other females.¹²² Another high born woman, Keakealaniwahine, who was once the ruler of the island of Hawaii was permitted to give her sacrifices at the temple but not participate in the eating of these.¹²³ In case of human sacrifices during wartime, usually the victorious chief sacrificed his defeated rival, thus taking his mana and lands. Chiefly women were not able to achieve political power in such way, but as Linnekin points out, such circumstances occurred only during periods of conquest and most likely primarily on the island of Hawaii where the practise of human sacrifice is documented. In times of peace and on other islands, where perhaps other deities than Kū were worshipped, this exclusion from being “sacrifiers” would not affect women’s ability to pursue their political ambitions.¹²⁴

Some Hawaiian texts also cause a certain doubt about the universality of the ‘aikapu praxis in Hawaii. In the after-word of her translation of the legend of Kamapua‘a, Kame‘eleihiwa wonders about the frequent mention of the hero’s eating with women. According to her, repeated allusions of this kind could have been a hint suggesting a hidden meaning, kaona. The legend in question was published in a Hawaiian newspaper

¹²⁰ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p. 36 (chiefly women would not be killed because they were the source of mana for the future generations, on the other hand few chiefesses would have sabotaged the rituals of their family members) and Linnekin 1990, p. 22

¹²¹ Linnekin 1990, p. 109

¹²² Kamakau 1992 (The People of Old), p. 10

¹²³ Linnekin 1990, p 25

¹²⁴ Linnekin 1990, p 28

in 1891, so the mentions of the common eating could have been a result of modern influences. Still, Kame‘eleihiwa believes that practices described in the legend could have been representative of real practice of ainoa within certain families in Hawaii. These families might have worshipped other gods than Kū. The religion of Kū being the cult of the ruling class, ainoa could have been the practise of the deposed chiefly families expressing their opposition. At the time of Cook’s arrival the dominant cult was that of Kū and Lono, with each of these gods having a season of the year dedicated to them. Kū was the conqueror deity overseeing the politics and warfare while Lono was the fertility god. The season of Lono, the Makahiki, was much shorter and always ended with Kū symbolically re-conquering his domain.¹²⁵ Kamapua‘a, the hero of the legend, was distantly related to Pele the volcano goddess. The family of Pele was referred to as Nāho‘aikū¹²⁶ (can be translated as “companions who disregard kapu”) while Kamapua‘a’s favourite brother’s name is Kekelei‘aikū (which means “pork fat eaten without consecration”). The ruling chiefs, who worshipped Kū, were forbidden to eat pork that was not consecrated.¹²⁷ According to Martha Beckwith, Kamapua‘a’s family might have been related to and worshipped Lono, because the name of Lono is common in their lineage.¹²⁸ Kame‘eleihiwa considers it possible that ‘aikū could have been the practice of the worshippers of Lono as well as those who trace their lineage to Lono, among them the commoners.¹²⁹

The division of work

“The ‘Aikapu religion was the foundation of all kapu or law. So men worked in areas governed by male Akua, and women worked in those governed by female Akua.”¹³⁰ Kame‘eleihiwa argues that men’s work in times of ‘aikapu was harder than women’s work. Although both sexes were involved in fishing, the dangerous deep-sea fishing was

¹²⁵ Rivalry between Ku and Lono – see Sahlins’ analysis of the death of Captain Cook

¹²⁶ ‘aikū: to eat freely, do as one wishes, to break kapu

¹²⁷ Kame‘eleihiwa 1996, p. 144-145

¹²⁸ Beckwith 1976, p. 40-41

¹²⁹ Kame‘eleihiwa 1996, p. 146

¹³⁰ Kame‘eleihiwa 2002, p. 8

done only by men. While women wove mats and made kapa cloth, men built all the houses that were required for the separate cooking and eating in addition to common sleeping houses. The agriculture, constructing of the separate ovens and all the cooking were also the responsibility of men.¹³¹ For some reason the first Western visitors saw such division of work as yet another proof of women's inferiority, because, as Jocelyn Linnekin argues, they themselves valued the products of Hawaiian men more, seeing women's crafts as souvenirs at most. But according to Linnekin products of both sexes were considered of equal value in the pre-contact society. Mats and kapa made by women were used for exchange, sacrifices and gifts. Captain Cook and other explorers were frequently presented with luxurious mats and fine kapa, of the quality reserved only for the high chiefs or wrapping of the temple images, but they valued the provisions of food more.¹³² There were some differences in work division on different islands. On Māui and Hawai'i women participated in agriculture, while on the other islands they followed the division described above.¹³³ According to Linnekin the division of labour was rather customary than ritual. There seems to be no evidence that men's agricultural tasks were kapu to women.¹³⁴

In times of war some Hawaiian women participated in battles. They accompanied their men in the battlefield as helpers, they carried supplies and camping gear, nursed the wounded and when necessary joined in the struggle. Women trained in warfare were called Koa wahine (brave, bold women) or Wahine kaua (battle women). "They were just like any other women. When the fighting was over, they came back home and took care of their children."¹³⁵

‘Aikapu: gender roles or religious practise?

‘Aikapu tends to be offered as the "official" ideology of Hawaiian gender relations. There are, however, many clues in the sources that this ideology was not as widely accepted as

¹³¹ Kame‘eleihiwa 2002, p. 8

¹³² Linnekin 1990, p. 40-41

¹³³ Pukui 1979, Nana I Ke Kumu vol II, p. 110

¹³⁴ Linnekin 1990, p. 38

¹³⁵ Beckwith 1976, p. 413 and Pukui 1979, Nana I Ke Kumu, vol II, p. 110

some claim. The differences in work division on different islands as well as the possibility that 'aikapu was mainly the practise of the ruling chiefs, suggest that other competing religious ideas might have existed. After all, the installation of the separating kapu is remembered through the myth of Papa and Wākea, implying that there was a different social system before.

Hawaiian idea of femininity was not necessarily determined by the 'aikapu. Apart from the work division in certain areas of daily life, Hawaiian women spent their time doing basically the same that men did. They enjoyed surfing and other sports, they danced and they played games, often together with men. Such “masculine” behaviour of women and the lack of distinct division between male and female horrified the missionaries.¹³⁶ During the Makahiki celebrations, women entered boxing contests and other sports activities traditionally considered male in Western cultures. It is difficult to find evidence of any limits of what proper female interests and activities should have been. Apart from rules imposed by 'aikapu there seems to have been no specific rules guiding the behaviour of men and women within their gender spheres.

¹³⁶ Green 2002, p. 237

3. Divinity, Mana & Power

Divinity and society

From Kumulipo we learn that everything in the Hawaiian universe was born not crafted by a deity. Whatever the interpretation of the very first verses, after the appearance of Kumulipo and Pō‘ele, a mating took place and life was born. “The universe is a genealogy, which is to say a total cosmological project of sexual reproduction.”¹³⁷ All life forms, including humans, were linked by lineage to the divine powers of origin. It is no accident that in this myth the first male and female were siblings, because incest in Hawaiian beliefs created divinity.¹³⁸ Although Kumulipo was not the only chant of its kind that existed in Hawaiian literature, it is today by necessity considered the most reliable in terms of indigenous symbolism and world-view. The other creation myths offered by native scholars of the 19th century were heavily influenced by Christian ideas.¹³⁹ Martha Beckwith points out that: “Cosmic myths are either absent or told in terms of human society”.¹⁴⁰ In Hawaiian mythology, gods and heroes were included in genealogies as ancestors and their deeds were presented as part of the history. They were thought of as the highest of the high chiefs who came from a far land, Kahiki, or the heaven.¹⁴¹ Unlike many other Polynesian deities, the Hawaiian gods were not perceived as separate supernatural beings. “Apparently there was no concept of the supernatural as a sphere separate from Nature. Polynesian religion was so integrated with life that no separate word for it was needed.”¹⁴²

Martha Beckwith believes that Hawaiian gods were originally imagined as the forces of nature and later identified with real persons, possibly accomplished chiefs.¹⁴³ In the stories and chants it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the gods from human chiefs,

¹³⁷ Sahlins 1985, p. 13

¹³⁸ Kame‘eleihiwa 2002, p. 3

¹³⁹ Beckwith 1981, p. 153-154

¹⁴⁰ Beckwith 1976, p. 5

¹⁴¹ Beckwith 1976, p. 3

¹⁴² Kane 1997, p. 30

¹⁴³ Beckwith 1976, p. 4

especially if they have the same name. According to Beckwith this confusion is intentional in a way because as she believes the divinity in Polynesia was manifested in activity (otherwise lying dormant). A chief whose actions resembled actions of a god may have acquired the god's name. A chief who had a child by his own daughter was called Wākea in remembrance of the divine ancestor responsible for establishing the 'aikapu.¹⁴⁴ The belief in shared physical lineage with the divine is what Sahlins termed "humanized mythology".¹⁴⁵ Such view of the creation process is unique to Hawaii compared with other Polynesian cultures. As Sahlins put it: "Polynesian cosmogony becomes Hawaiian sociology".¹⁴⁶

Akua

In this text I use the English terms "god" and "goddess" as a translation for the Hawaiian concept of "akua". However, it is a rather clumsy solution to the problem of finding suitable synonyms and English equivalents. "Akua" might refer to gods but also to spirits, divine, sacred beings, chiefs of high rank or even ghosts or idols. According to Herb Kawainui Kāne: "If we take "god" to mean a supernatural being, the term mistranslates akua, which means a being of immense power, whether a spirit or a living person."¹⁴⁷ There was a great variety of akua, in fact all forms of nature were believed to be manifestations of spirit forces.¹⁴⁸ Besides the great gods and goddesses worshipped at the largest temples, there were smaller deities called 'aumakua. These were personal or family deities, often ancestors who could appear in a shape of sharks, owls, hawks or some other animals depending on the local tradition.¹⁴⁹ According to Beckwith, the terms "akua", "'aumakua" and "kupua" (a child of a god born to humans, with limited divine powers) were interchangeable depending on the attitude of the worshipper.¹⁵⁰ There were

¹⁴⁴ Beckwith 1976, p. 4

¹⁴⁵ Sahlins 1981, p. 14

¹⁴⁶ Sahlins 1981, p. 15

¹⁴⁷ Kane 1997, p. 30

¹⁴⁸ Beckwith 1976, p. 82

¹⁴⁹ Pukui and Elbert "Hawaiian Dictionary" 1986

¹⁵⁰ Beckwith 1976, p. 2

also different families of gods. The greatest akua were related to a multitude of lesser deities by their genealogies. The hierarchy of these divine families reflected the hierarchy of Hawaiian society.¹⁵¹ The worship of the great gods included also worship of these gods' families consisting of lesser akua, 'aumakua and spirits.¹⁵² According to "Hawaiian Dictionary": "Akua might mate with humans and give birth to normal humans". Sahlins made a point of the opposite situation where humans mate with the akua in order to raise their children's rank. Such theogamy, as Sahlins called it, was quite real since some high chiefs were considered to be divine.¹⁵³

The most important male gods were Kū, Lono, Kāne and Kanaloa. Most of the other male gods were "classified as individual forms of four major classes whose "heads" are the generic gods, Kū, Lono, Kāne and Kanaloa".¹⁵⁴ The goddesses were as numerous as the male akua and often represented complementary aspects of the same manifestations of nature as their male counterparts. About Kū and Hina, Beckwith wrote that together they "include the whole earth and the heavens from east to west".¹⁵⁵ Hina was one of the most celebrated goddesses. Her body was manifested as the coral reef and she was the firstborn child of Pō'ele and Kumulipo. She presided over reef fishing, a traditional female occupation. Haumea and Papa were especially celebrated for their miraculous abilities to give birth. Papa was the sacred ancestor of the Hawaiian people, famous for her acceptance of 'aikapu and giving birth to the islands. Haumea could give birth from any part of her body and she herself was reborn in every generation of her descendants. Among the lesser female akua were Mo'o, the lizard deities. They were believed to be shape-shifters able to appear as beautiful women residing near water, who enjoyed seducing and drowning men.¹⁵⁶ Pele, who originally came with her family from Kahiki, or Tahiti in some myths, and settled in the volcanoes of Hawaii, was

¹⁵¹ Beckwith 1976, p. 81-82

¹⁵² Beckwith 1976, p. 82

¹⁵³ Sahlins 1985, p. 5-26

¹⁵⁴ Sahlins 1981, p. 17

¹⁵⁵ Beckwith 1976, p. 12

¹⁵⁶ Kame'eleihiwa 2002, p. 3-8

perhaps the most feared goddess. She controlled the powers of fire and lava, and together with her youngest sister, Hi‘iaka, she was a patron of hula.¹⁵⁷

The places of worship were called heiau. They were just as different as the akua they were dedicated to. The chiefs founded large and impressive luakini heiaus and also other temples for major deities. The commoners erected fishing shrines and other smaller heiaus, sometimes only an altar or a large stone.¹⁵⁸ Human sacrifice was connected to Kū rituals and only practised in luakini heiaus. Only a ruling chief could erect and consecrate a luakini.¹⁵⁹ Worship of Kū and Lono was season-bound. During winter Hawaiians celebrated the Makahiki festival dedicated to fertility god Lono. All warfare ended at this time and the yearly gifts were offered to the chiefs. Makahiki is associated with dance, games and sports. At the end of Lono’s season Kū, god of politics and warfare reclaimed his domain through symbolic conquest and was worshipped for the remaining part of the year.¹⁶⁰ Female akua were worshipped mainly outside the luakini heiaus and by commoners.¹⁶¹ But as Kame‘eleihiwa stated: “Female sanction was important in every major ceremony, in the Aha and the Makahiki, so that a women’s temple, the Hale o Papa, was attached to every important male heiau.”¹⁶² According to Kamakau only chiefesses of the highest rank worshipped in Hale o Papa.¹⁶³ Many akua were worshipped by both men and women. The image of goddess Kihawahine was carried around the island together with images of male gods during Makahiki. Laka, a hula goddess was prayed to by both men and women. Kahekili, a chief of Maui, worshipped goddesses such as Kihawahine, Haumea and Walinu‘u. In other instances men and women had separate deities presiding over the same activity. During Makahiki both sexes engaged in boxing matches, although under the patronage of separate akua.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁷ Beckwith 1976, p. 167-169 and 180

¹⁵⁸ Kamakau 1987, p. 129-133

¹⁵⁹ Kamakau 1987, p. 146 (note 7)

¹⁶⁰ Sahlins 1981, p. 18-20

¹⁶¹ Linnekin 1990, p. 31

¹⁶² Kame‘eleihiwa 2002, p. 9 (The Aha ritual secures the power of Kū to the ruling chief)

¹⁶³ Kamakau 1987, p. 129

¹⁶⁴ Linnekin 1990, p. 30-31

Kahuna

Priests, or those responsible for temple rituals, were of chiefly class. The term “kahuna” alone is not synonymous with the English “priest”. In Hawaii many of the professions that were considered secular in Western cultures, had a strong ritual aspect connected to the akua governing a given occupation. “Kahuna” might rather be translated as an “expert in any profession (whether male or female)”¹⁶⁵, in terms of worship the kahuna would be a ritual expert. According to Kamakau there were several orders of the kahuna; the two orders of kahuna pule (worship experts) were priests of Lono and Kū (kahuna nui was from the Kū-order). Among other orders were Kaula prophets and various kahuna-specialists, those who studied the stars, land experts, lua (Hawaiian martial art) experts and others.¹⁶⁶

The fact that there existed female kahuna is not commonly mentioned in the scholarly literature about Hawaiian religion. According to Handy there were no specialised priestesses in Polynesia, but certain women (usually highborn elders) were required to perform certain rituals.¹⁶⁷ However, William Ellis recorded meeting several priestesses of Pele during his trip in Hawaii and even had a theological dispute with one of them. Ellis was a missionary who came to the islands in 1822. Judging from Ellis’ account, these women had a rather sophisticated priestly education and were highly respected by both chiefs and commoners.¹⁶⁸ Linnekin believes that these women were rather female prophets, this according to her would not give them the same status as the priests of male gods enjoyed.¹⁶⁹ According to Mary Kawena Pukui, kaula, the female priest-prophets, were very rare. They were also referred to as malo kea (white malo, bleached malo was a symbol of sacredness, worn by priests in religious ceremonies), “They had all the privileges of male priests, even to beating the sacred drums.”¹⁷⁰ Female

¹⁶⁵ Pukui and Elbert “Hawaiian Dictionary” 1986

¹⁶⁶ Kamakau 1992 (The People of Old), p. 7-8

¹⁶⁷ Handy 1927, p.158

¹⁶⁸ Ellis 2004, p. 301-304

¹⁶⁹ Linnekin 1990, p. 32

¹⁷⁰ Pukui 1979, Nana I Ke Kumu, vol II, p. 110

kahuna sometimes appear in the legends and myths without any indication that the existence of priestesses was unusual.¹⁷¹ In modern Hawaii as well there are women who are referred to as kahuna without any suggestion of this being a novelty. Frank Kawaikapuokalani Hewett, a dancer and kumu hula, was taught Hawaiian traditions, rituals and hula by kahuna Aunty Emma DeFries, a descendant of Kamehameha's high priest Hewahewa.¹⁷² Mo'okini Heiau on the island of Hawaii, is today attended to by Leimomi Mo'okini Lum, who is said to be the temple's seventh female kahuna nui (high priestess).¹⁷³

Chiefs and commoners

The distinction between chiefs and commoners was similar to this between akua and humans. The chiefs were by lineage believed to belong to a senior line while the commoners were their juniors. The hierarchy in Hawaiian society was imagined by the "idea of ancestry from a divine parent stock and hence of grades of rank as revealed in family genealogies."¹⁷⁴ Traditionally in Hawaiian family the older siblings were expected to feed and take care of the younger siblings, while the younger siblings served the older. Similar idea of reciprocity was also reflected in the organisation of the society. The chiefs and the akua, including the land, fed the people and the people served and honoured their "elders".¹⁷⁵ Because the high chiefs, ali'i nui, were believed to be of divine status, they were kept separated from the common people by personal kapus. Transgression of these kapus resulted in death. All of the chiefs' private possessions, the places they walked and slept, their food and even their shadow, were kapu to the commoners and lower ranking chiefs.¹⁷⁶ The Hawaiian proverb: "Chiefs are sharks that walk on land", reflects the idea

¹⁷¹ An example of such legend is "Legend of Kalaunuiahua" in Beckwith 1976, p. 382

¹⁷² Sanburn 2002, <http://www.honoluluweekly.com/archives/coverstory%20%202002/08-07-02%20Kumu/08-07-02%20Kumu.html>

¹⁷³ Merin 2006, <http://www.creators.com/lifestylefeatures/around-world-jennifer-merin/big-island-of-hawaii-s-culture-of-nature.html>

¹⁷⁴ Beckwith 1976, p. 306

¹⁷⁵ Kame'eiehiwa 1992, p. 25

¹⁷⁶ Kame'eiehiwa 1992, p. 37

that chiefs were dangerous and being near one was risky.¹⁷⁷ According to Kame‘eleihiwa, Polynesians loved their gods precisely because they were dangerous, they had the power to take life but also give life, a power that ali‘i nui too wielded. The lower ranking chiefs, kaukau ali‘i, mediated the contact between the commoners and high chiefs. They served as konohiki, “stewards”, and they supervised the people on behalf of their ali‘i nui, while also exposing themselves to the dangers of proximity to divine chiefs.¹⁷⁸

The status of chiefs was achieved through birth, as Kamakau stated “In the womb was obtained the rank of each chief”.¹⁷⁹ The chiefs who were conceived through incest of high-ranking parents were believed to be of divine nature. Their rank was called nī‘aupi‘o and pi‘o, meaning “arched” or “the lineage arching back at itself”. According to Kamakau, “The kapu of a god was superior to the kapu of a chief, but the kapus of the nī‘aupi‘o and pi‘o chiefs were equal to the gods’.” The chiefesses of these ranks could enter sacred places of the heiaus and eat the sacrificial food, even the items usually forbidden to women.¹⁸⁰ According to Kame‘eleihiwa incest not only created divinity, but was also a proof of divinity. Based on the myth of Wākea, a generation gap between the parents was especially desired.¹⁸¹

Greg Denning analysed another metaphor of the relations between chiefs and commoners, in which the ruling chiefs were associated with strangers who came from distant lands and conquered the indigenous people. “The Polynesians were native and stranger among themselves and to themselves. They saw themselves as made up of native, those born of the land of their islands, and stranger, those who had at some point come from a distant place”. The chiefs, being the sharks that walk the land, were associated with arriving from the sea. Even in times of peace the ascending chief would ritually play the role of a conqueror and then marry the high-ranking women of the

¹⁷⁷ Denning 1996, p.65

¹⁷⁸ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p. 37

¹⁷⁹ Kamakau 1992 (The People of Old), p. 9

¹⁸⁰ Kamakau 1992 (The People of Old), p. 10

¹⁸¹ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p. 40-41

“native” line. “In myth and ritual this opposition of native and stranger was a constant metaphor of Polynesian politics and social organisation.”¹⁸²

Religion and Politics

Any display of talent, wisdom, fertility and other desirable qualities was considered to be the evidence of some amount of mana. “Mana was exhibited in persons, in power, strength, prestige, reputation, skill, dynamic personality, intelligence; in things, in efficacy, in “luck”; that is in accomplishment. These qualities were not mana; they were evidences of mana, which was itself but the focussing and transmission of the potency of nature”¹⁸³ It is difficult to translate the English word “power” to Hawaiian without creating a certain ambiguity whether the meaning is religious or political. The composite term “ho‘omana” means: “to empower”, “authorise” but also “religion” and “worship”¹⁸⁴ Religion and politics were closely connected if not inseparable. In Sahlins’ definition “mana is the creative power Hawaiians describe as making visible what is invisible”.¹⁸⁵ Just as possession of great mana made it possible for a person to achieve political power, so was the possession of such power believed to be an evidence of mana. A display of power was essential as the means of legitimising it. It was believed that proper worship through sacrifice and observance of kapu laws would ensure the favours of gods. At the same time, success was seen as an evidence of mana and the good will of the divine. Proper worship and observance of kapu were central not only in achieving power, but also social order and fertility to the land and people. Such state of balance and prosperity was to Hawaiians known as pono.¹⁸⁶ According to Kame‘eleihiwa, “in traditional times, the Hawaiian polity was religious and Hawaiian religion, at the level of Chiefs, was political. The two were inseparably entwined and their purpose was to keep the universe

¹⁸² Denning, p. 64-65

¹⁸³ Handy 1927, p. 26

¹⁸⁴ Pukui and Elbert “Hawaiian Dictionary” 1986, p. 235

¹⁸⁵ Sahlins 1981, p. 31

¹⁸⁶ Good, righteous, just, excellent; referring to the universe in a state of perfect harmony - Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p.391

in a state of pono”¹⁸⁷. In pre-Christian times the priests functioned as political advisors and they decided if the king was pono by investigating if the rituals and kapu were correctly executed.¹⁸⁸ The kapu system was meant to control and protect the mana of chiefs and akua so the land might be pono, and in consequence prosperous.

Genealogies were the most important sources of mana and rank. Hawaiians traced ascent, not descent, they chose a “way upward, by path that notably includes female ancestors, to a connection with some ancient ruling line”.¹⁸⁹ Genealogy experts according to Malo were “washbasins of the ali‘i in which to cleanse them”¹⁹⁰ In Hawaiian tradition, tracing one’s lineage was indeed a task that demanded help from such experts. It was possible to claim dual motherhood, called punalua (two springs) or dual paternity, po‘olua, meaning two heads.¹⁹¹ According to Linnekin the concept of po‘olua “refers not so much to ambiguity as an acceptance of dual paternity”.¹⁹² According to Kame‘eleihiwa, high chiefesses consciously arranged their love affairs with other high chiefs in order to produce children who could claim a genealogical link to two fathers.¹⁹³ A high chief who had a child with a commoner woman, might have chosen to give her tokens of paternity (his feather cape or some other symbol of rank) and in this way acknowledge the child. If the woman had a husband, the child would have two fathers and two genealogical links. It seems maybe paradoxical for a high chief to consciously produce and acknowledge a child of lower rank than himself, but such offspring would very likely activate the familiar bond and eventually make a potential loyal servant.

“Since unions are both hypergamous and hypogamous, Hawaiian chiefly marriage creates senior/junior relations more than it is structured by them. In broader sense, the chiefs’ serial

¹⁸⁷ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p.13

¹⁸⁸ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p.139

¹⁸⁹ Sahlins 1985, p. 20

¹⁹⁰ Buck 1993, p. 41

¹⁹¹ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p. 43

¹⁹² Linnekin 1990, p. 96

¹⁹³ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p. 43

polygamy creates Hawaiian society by generating a hierarchy of rank. By marrying up, the chiefs produce successors; by taking spouses from below, they produce retainers.”¹⁹⁴

For such po‘olua child having a high ranking biological father opened possibilities of political career, while the “other father” also achieved higher status by “having” a child of higher rank than himself. This is an example of how a commoner woman was central in elevating her family status and possibly strengthening the position of the high chief by producing him faithful followers.¹⁹⁵ “In this genealogical game – favorite arena of politics for the Hawaiian monarchy until well into the nineteenth century – lineage is not so much a structure as it is an argument.”¹⁹⁶

The Hawaiian practise of hānai¹⁹⁷ provided the means for even more genealogical possibilities. Hānai was a tradition of giving children in permanent adoption to family members, especially in the grandparent generation. It was considered the privilege of the grandparents to claim their first-born grandchildren. A female baby was usually adopted by the maternal grandparents, while a male baby belonged to the paternal grandparents.¹⁹⁸ Hānai was practised among both chiefs and commoners, although in the chiefly families the children were sometimes given in adoption to someone other than the grandparents for political reasons. Children of high rank given to chiefs of lesser rank raised their adoptive parents’ status and such gift of hānai created strong loyalty bonds.¹⁹⁹

Rank was not only determined by genealogy, but also through action. “Social status in Hawaii could be earned, one’s birthright adjusted; it was possible either to rise or fall”.²⁰⁰ One could rise above their social status given at birth by different means, such as proven skill, conquest, and conceiving children with partners of higher rank. Hawaiians called such ambitious conduct ‘imihaku: “to seek a new Akua, Ali‘i or source

¹⁹⁴ Linnekin 1990, p. 103

¹⁹⁵ Linnekin 1990, p. 96

¹⁹⁶ Sahlins 1985, p. 20

¹⁹⁷ usually translated as “adoption”, but the term means “to feed, to support, to act as a parent to a child” - Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p. 389

¹⁹⁸ Pukui 1979, Nana I Ke Kumu, vol I, p. 49

¹⁹⁹ Linnekin 1990, p. 108

²⁰⁰ Linnekin 1990, p. 95

of power”.²⁰¹ Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa describes two such paths to acquiring mana, the way of Kū, or conquest, and the way of Lono, mating with a partner of higher rank.²⁰² Both ways usually led to acquisition of land. A successful chief would both conquer and marry well, usually by marrying the women of the conquered chief’s family. King Kamehameha, who was not among the highest of chiefs by birth, achieved great political success through conquest of land and marriage with Keōpūolani, the most sacred person in Hawaii at the time.²⁰³ Linnekin points out that histories and legends about chiefs are preoccupied with the motif of usurpation and rebellion.²⁰⁴ This implies that the insecurity of the ruling chief’s position was part of the dynamics of the social structure. One of the most celebrated (and frequently used to illustrate the intricacies of the Hawaiian system) stories of rebellion and usurpation, is the story of ‘Umi, son of a ruling chief and a commoner woman. As a grown man, ‘Umi summoned his supporters and led a rebellion against his father’s other son and heir. He succeeded and established a new line of ruling chiefs as he claimed his father’s lineage. “‘Umi’s story narrates the fatal flaw of Hawaiian chiefly authority: a chronic threat of rebellion founded on the dialectical relationship between ascribed and achieved status”.²⁰⁵ This statement is not meant literally as a criticism of the system of course, Linnekin shows that such insecurity of authority grants “no monopoly of force” and further quotes Sahlins who believed that such structure demonstrated “the maturity of the Polynesian system”.²⁰⁶ “Polynesian systems are characterized by a high degree of manipulability in the practical working through of status determination.”²⁰⁷ All members of the society, including the gods, were constantly subjected to control. All had obligations towards others and only by fulfilling those could they maintain their position. A chief who did not rule justly would not

²⁰¹ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p. 389

²⁰² Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p. 46-47

²⁰³ Linnekin 1990, p. 16

²⁰⁴ Linnekin 1990, p. 101-108

²⁰⁵ Linnekin 1990, p. 98

²⁰⁶ Linnekin 1990, p. 111

²⁰⁷ Linnekin 1990, p. 34

achieve the support of the priests resulting in lack of support from the commoners. Just as in a family, the social classes had their hierarchy and duties.

Political power, women and mana

Linnekin believes that too often the focus of gender studies are either the ideological or behavioural aspects of women's roles but never both. In case of Polynesia there has been a tendency to emphasis the purity/pollution issue instead of women's political activities. She believes that the kapu system was actually "an arena for gender politics".²⁰⁸ Despite the 'aikapu, which many believe barred women from public exercise of political power, female rulers and other powerful chiefesses appear quite frequently both in Hawaiian history and in myths. It seems that rank rather than sex was fundamental in native politics. According to Martha Beckwith a chiefess of high rank became a ruler when there was no available male heir of equal rank.²⁰⁹ One of the most famous female rulers, or mō'ī²¹⁰, was Kūkaniloko named after the sacred birthstones in O'ahu. According to Kame'eleihiwa, Kūkaniloko became mō'ī of O'ahu about 1375 AD and was later followed by her daughter.²¹¹ In Fornander's description, Kūkaniloko was "frequently referred to as a great and powerful chiefess, who kept the country quiet and orderly"²¹² while her daughter Kalaimanu'ia is said to have ordered the construction of several great fishponds.²¹³ Kame'eleihiwa believes that Kūkaniloko's rule began the trend for female mō'ī. After beginning on the island of O'ahu, this tradition spread to other islands and was especially prominent on the island of Hawaii, where according to Kame'eleihiwa women ruled from approximately 1550 until 1720.²¹⁴ On other islands it persisted

²⁰⁸ Linnekin 1990, p. 13-14

²⁰⁹ Beckwith 1976, p. 7

²¹⁰ supreme ruler (of an island or large part of an island), often translated as "king"

²¹¹ Kame'eleihiwa 2002, p. 9

²¹² Fornander 1996, p. 91

²¹³ Fornander 1996, p. 269

²¹⁴ Kame'eleihiwa 2002, p. 10-11

possibly even longer since Captain Cook actually met high chiefess Kamakahelei who was mō‘ī of Kaua‘i at the time of his arrival.²¹⁵

Still men became mō‘ī more frequently than women did. Linnekin believes that the nature of worship at luakini heiaus may be the reason why women appear less frequently than men in the roles of “military conquerors” and “ultimate political authority”.²¹⁶ Although many high chiefesses never became mō‘ī, they did manage their own lands and they did exert political power on their own.²¹⁷ Linnekin elaborates women’s significance as vessels of mana. Hawaiian women enjoyed authority over their unions with men and could pursue their own strategies connected to the “path of Lono”. Through their reproductive powers high-ranking women were considered to be the points of ascent to the acquisition of mana.²¹⁸ The high-ranking women were central in genealogy related politics and therefore able to exercise control within such. “The highest *kapu* tend to be vested in women, so that the matriline in the chiefly genealogies are lines whereby the highest tabus are transmitted.”²¹⁹ Linnekin believes that high-ranking Hawaiian women were essential to men’s political ambitions. She calls the chiefesses “vessels of the highest rank”. Often chiefly women were of higher rank than their husbands.²²⁰

Hierarchy and gender

Status determined by genealogy and acquired by the means of ‘imihaku overshadowed the significance of gender. The restrictions of ‘aikapu that women of all social strata may have experienced seem minor in the context of social organisation and hierarchy of the Hawaiian universe. Women were able to participate in all public activities except the worship of male gods; and they were able to compete for power, influence and position with men. The ‘aikapu system did not only exclude women from certain activities of

²¹⁵ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p. 80

²¹⁶ Linnekin 1990, p. 28

²¹⁷ Linnekin 1990, p. 153

²¹⁸ Linnekin 1990, p. 110

²¹⁹ Linnekin 1990, p. 68

²²⁰ Linnekin 1990, p. 16

men; it worked the other way around as well. Women's ritual activities in hale o Papa were an arena from which men were excluded. The high chiefesses, who controlled land and commanded their own retainers, were quite able to contest the political dominance of any other chiefs, whether male or female. The restrictions of rank determined by birth were far greater, although many examples in history and mythology show that rebellion and usurpation were normative means of raising one's position in the hierarchy. Similarly, the certain ambiguity of genealogies created further options for elevating one's rank.

4. ‘Ainoa & Christianity

The possible significance of foreign influences

Western influence on the development of new political structures in Hawaii, began already at the moment of the first contact with the British in 1778. Kamehameha, the first monarch ruling all the islands in the archipelago, used both European advisors and guns in his conquest of unification, which he began in 1790 and ended in 1810. Some scholars claim that Kamehameha's unification campaign was inspired by Western imperialistic ideas, but conquest was a very prominent part of Hawaiian political life in pre-contact times as well. Still, the possibility of warfare on such scale was most likely granted by use of foreign weapons. Until his death in 1819, Kamehameha ruled by traditional laws and customs and the influence of Christianity on Hawaiian society was minimal.

The first foreigners who settled in Hawaii were mainly sailors and merchants, the latter influenced the way trade was developed and money economy introduced. Apart from their ideologies, the foreigners brought with them diseases that proved deadly to Hawaiians. The estimates of the native population at the time of Cook's visit vary from 400,000 to 800,000. However, by 1893 the native population had declined to 40,000. Especially the first forty years after meeting with Western diseases the depopulation was dramatic as its rate is estimated to 83 percent.²²¹ Such a crisis was obviously one of the factors that contributed to major changes in the native culture.

In Sahlin's view, the kapu system was brought out of balance by the interaction with the foreigners. The presence of the Europeans created situations that were not easily solved by traditional Hawaiian means. The trade created a competition over sources of mana between chiefs and commoners. In their attempt to protect the access to foreign goods, the chiefs used more violence towards the common people than usual because traditionally such situations of competition did not occur.²²² The chiefs also used the concept of kapu in their efforts to control the trade. The ritual law acquired a new secular

²²¹ Kame'eleihiwa 1992, p. 20, 141

²²² Sahlins 1981, p. 42-43

dimension. Sahlins called this change the crisis of kapu because the regulation of trade by kapu caused the kapu system to be redefined.²²³

“The Hawaiian chiefs, for good and traditional reasons, consistently used the power of tabu in an unprecedented manner to accumulate property in trade. Doing so, they functionally displaced the received relationships of the concept, away from the supernatural and the ritual, toward the material and political.”²²⁴

Possessing the foreign resources and technology was the same as possessing their mana, as Kame‘eleihiwa states: “in their search for control over the foreign element in their world, the Ali‘i Nui were determined to ‘ai (consume and rule) the physical manifestations of the foreigner-- his goods, his foods, and his “sparkling water” (liquor)”²²⁵

Abolition of kapu

When Kamehameha died in 1819, his son Liholiho inherited the throne. But it was Liholiho’s cousin Kekuaokalani who inherited Kamehameha’s god Kūkā‘ilimoku (Kū Snatcher of Islands). This strategy was not unheard of in Hawaii, it ensured that the next ruler must remain pono or risk rebellion by the keeper of the war deity.²²⁶ Kamehameha himself inherited Kūkā‘ilimoku while another high chief, Kiwala‘ō, inherited the title of mō‘ī. The success of Kamehameha’s conquest of Kiwala‘ō’s kingdom and later all the islands, was credited to the empowerment given to him by this akua.²²⁷ Kamehameha left many widows, among them the most sacred (of nī‘aupi‘o rank) person in the islands, Keōpūolani, who was Liholiho’s biological mother. But it was Ka‘ahumanu who became the most prominent political figure. She was Liholiho’s hānai mother and Kamehameha’s favourite wife. After Kamehameha’s death she became the co-ruler with the young king

²²³ Sahlins 1981, p. 44-45

²²⁴ Sahlins 1981, p. 71

²²⁵ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p. 146

²²⁶ Silva 2004, p. 28

²²⁷ Silva 2004, p. 121

because this was, as she proclaimed, the late king's will.²²⁸ Ka'ahumanu was considered very intelligent and charismatic; she was a powerful chiefess from a prominent ruling line of Māui chiefs.²²⁹ She was known as a notorious kapu-breaker and a fierce protector of other, often lower-ranking kapu violators.²³⁰ Ka'ahumanu held a political office of kuhina nui (chief political advisor) which she inherited from her father.²³¹ Together with Keōpūolani and other women of the royal family, she arranged an abolition of the kapu system and destruction of the temples.

As a traditional part of the mourning period, there was a temporary suspension of 'aikapu. During this free eating time, Liholiho and Kekuaokalani were sent away. When the time came to install the new king the 'ainoa had still not ceased and after a short return, Liholiho left the court again. He then attempted to perform the 'aha ritual through which the mana of Kū would be secured to him. According to Kame'eleihiwa he failed to perform the ritual due to his drinking at the time.²³² According to Kamakau he succeeded, but did not dare to proclaim the end to 'ainoa because Ka'ahumanu was against it and she was the co-ruler.²³³ In the end Liholiho accepted the will of the royal women and ate with them in public. Kekuaokalani, the keeper of Kū, rebelled but was defeated and this marked the final abolition of 'aikapu and other kapu. Because symbolically the akua Kū was defeated, the sacrificial religion of Kū was abolished as well and the temples were destroyed.²³⁴ The Kahuna Nui, Hewahewa, actually led the destruction of the temples.²³⁵ It is interesting that in William Ellis' account of this event it is Liholiho who is given the whole credit for the abolition. The king's motives were supposedly a wish to better the conditions of women "whom the tabu sunk into a state of extreme wretchedness and degradation, obliging them to subsist only on inferior kinds of food" and a wish to reduce

²²⁸ Kame'eleihiwa 2002, p. 11

²²⁹ Kame'eleihiwa 2002, p. 11

²³⁰ Kame'eleihiwa 1992, p.72 and Daws 1927, p. 56

²³¹ Kame'eleihiwa 2002, p. 11

²³² Kame'eleihiwa 1992, p. 76

²³³ Silva 2004, p. 28

²³⁴ Silva 2004, p. 29-30

²³⁵ Kame'eleihiwa 1992, p. 82

the power of priests.²³⁶ But then, Ellis was a missionary and may have had his own motives for such interpretations. Most native and foreign historians agree that Liholiho's role in the abolition was rather passive. Ka'ahumanu announced that she and her people intended to live free of kapu the moment the new king had been installed.²³⁷ Liholiho only joined the kapu breakers after his attempts to perform a ritual in which mana of Kū would be secured to him had failed.²³⁸

Ka'ahumanu's motive for the abolition of kapu system remains a mystery and has been interpreted differently by various historians. Gavan Daws argues it was a purely political move in order to gain control over state affairs previously connected to temple activities to which women had no access.²³⁹ Because Ka'ahumanu had many supporters among the lower chiefs, another political motive could be a wish to legitimise the installation of these chiefs in high positions within the government.²⁴⁰ Linnekin too believes that one of the causes for the abolition was that high-ranking powerful women were restricted by kapu from exercising their full potential politically. A wish for further centralisation of power by preventing the threat of rebellion by the keeper of Kūkā'ilimoku and the supporting kahuna, was supposedly the other reason. "The sacrificial religion was both a source of legitimacy for the ruling chiefs and, through the assignment of religious guardianship to junior collaterals, a potential basis for rebellion."²⁴¹ Kame'eleihiwa objects to this theory and points to the tradition of powerful female rulers in the times of 'aikapu, Ka'ahumanu could have followed their example more easily than abolish the kapu.²⁴² And as for the threat of rebellion, it was Ka'ahumanu who commanded the kingdom's most powerful armies of her junior-line Māui relatives.²⁴³

²³⁶ Ellis 2004, p.109

²³⁷ Kame'eleihiwa 1994, p. 75 and Sahlins 1981, p. 63

²³⁸ Kame'eleihiwa 1994, p. 76 and Sahlins 1981, p.64

²³⁹ Daws 1974, p.56

²⁴⁰ Daws 1974, p.60

²⁴¹ Linnekin 1990, p. 71-72

²⁴² Kame'eleihiwa 1992, p. 79-80

²⁴³ Kame'eleihiwa 2002, p. 11

There is no doubt that Ka'ahumanu was in control of most of the affairs of the kingdom, she was the one with the power to distribute land and she conducted all business with foreigners. Even if we accept that the abolition of kapu was politically motivated, what reason had the other royal women for supporting such transformation? Kame'eleihiwa proposes a number of possible reasons for their decision. According to her the abolition was most likely a result of faith failure; Hawaiians saw that foreigners paid no attention to kapu rules and still they were prosperous and immune to diseases that were killing the native population. Kamehameha was considered a very religious king and he ruled with accordance to kapu and tradition, still people were dying by the thousands.²⁴⁴ Maintaining of these laws and traditional worship no longer seemed to be the source of mana and prosperity for the native nation. Because, as Kame'eleihiwa argues, the divine female ancestors "had first sanctioned the '*Aikapu*' the responsibility for abandoning the practise now rested in the hands of the high chiefesses."²⁴⁵

'Ainoa

According to Sahlins the system of co-ruling of male kings with female kuhina nui reversed the "normal gender distinction between an active and public masculinity, a stable and domestic femininity." The end of 'aikapu supposedly contributed to this change.

"The transformations are consistent with Valeri's argument that after 1819 and the overthrow of the sacrificial system in which women had been ritually disadvantaged, hierarchy came to depend primarily on genealogical-reproductive principles, wherein women figure decisively."²⁴⁶

It is surprising that Sahlins considers the distinction between domestic female and public male "normal" as there is historical evidence (even from the time after Cook's arrival) that Hawaiian women were all but not "domesticated". The fact that women were symbolically connected to land does not automatically translate to the Western idea of the

²⁴⁴ Kame'eleihiwa 1992, p.79-82

²⁴⁵ Kame'eleihiwa 2002, p.12

²⁴⁶ Sahlins 1992, p. 120, Sahlins 2000, p. 196-197

“stable and domestic femininity” separated from the public and political sphere. Still, Sahlin’s argument is to a certain degree consistent with Kame‘eleihiwa’s earlier mentioned idea that, assuming that the female element was dangerous and had genealogical seniority over male, the ritual restrictions that ‘aikapu imposed on women brought a symbolical equality of power between the sexes. Although Kame‘eleihiwa does not agree that the abolition of kapu suddenly unleashed the female power as women had also earlier been both actively and publicly involved in politics.

The abolition of kapu, and even the destruction of temples, was not necessarily synonymous with complete abolition of native religion. In Hawaiian mythology there exist accounts of an earlier reformation of religion initiated by the Tahitian priest Pa‘ao, who supposedly brought with him several sacred chiefs and installed new stricter kapu and new rituals such as human sacrifice.²⁴⁷ Because at the time of Kamehameha’s death the observing of traditions did not seem to grant prosperity to the kingdom, royal women might have chosen to open the door to what they perceived as alternative sources of mana, such as certain elements of Western culture. The seemingly powerless gods were stripped of their privileges, but the Hawaiians were not left without any religion as the missionaries, who arrived a few months later liked to believe.²⁴⁸ According to Kekuni Blaisdell, contemporary native Hawaiian activist and medical doctor, the abolition of kapu had also practical consequences for the society, because many kapus “governed personal hygiene and public sanitation”, pollution of water and land and also lack of hygiene were the result.²⁴⁹ In matters of religion, the common people still secretly worshipped Pele, their ‘aumakua and local deities. Many of the wooden images of gods and bones of the chiefs were hidden after the destruction of temples had begun.²⁵⁰ Linnekin noticed that it is interesting that cult of Pele survived the abolition to this day despite the fact that many scholars had labelled the worship of goddesses as “marginal”.²⁵¹ But then Pele’s mana is very visible and indeed manifested in constant

²⁴⁷ Sahlin 1981, p.10

²⁴⁸ Ellis 2004, p.30

²⁴⁹ Blaisdell 2002, p. 282

²⁵⁰ Daws 1974, p. 59

²⁵¹ Linnekin 1990, p. 31

activity of the volcanoes on the island of Hawaii. It is very difficult to speculate in the possible consequences the abolition of 'aikapu had on Hawaiian ideas of gender roles. The period of time when the free eating was practised, was very short and Christianity with new restrictions and new gender ideology arrived too soon for the 'ainoa system to fully develop. There was not enough time for a new form of indigenous Hawaiian religion to emerge, a kind of religion that Kame'eleihiwa believes could have been more "appropriate to the governing of Hawaiian society".²⁵²

The arrival of missionaries

In 1820, half a year after the abolition of kapu, the first group of Calvinist missionaries with their wives arrived from USA. They believed that it was their Christian god who had inspired the Hawaiians to abolish the kapu and destroy the temples as a way of preparing the way for the mission.²⁵³ They were allowed to stay and start mission schools, but at first they found the Hawaiian people rather resistant to conversion. "That these missionaries were not merely Christians but Calvinists was nothing short of a tragedy, because their capitalist tendencies and sexually repressive philosophy was so antithetical to the Hawaiian celebration of life."²⁵⁴

The missionaries had found "perfect heathens" in Hawaiians and their descriptions of the native people reflect this very clearly. As Daws put it, the missionaries "were quite unable to look at Hawaiians with the eyes of Cook".²⁵⁵ Hiram Bingham, who was the leader of the missionary group, wrote this first impression: "...the appearance of destitution, degradation, and barbarism, among the chattering, almost naked savages, whose heads and feet, and much of their sunburnt swarthy skins, were bare, was appalling."²⁵⁶ Of course if the Hawaiians were any less "savage", the credit for saving their souls would be lesser as well; consequently, most of the observations of the native

²⁵² Kame'eleihiwa 1992, p. 316

²⁵³ Grimshaw 1989, p. 27

²⁵⁴ Kame'eleihiwa 1992, p. 138

²⁵⁵ Daws 1974, p. 64

²⁵⁶ quoted in Kame'eleihiwa 1992, p. 139

people recorded by the missionaries are very negative.²⁵⁷ Nicholas Thomas analysed a similar kind of missionary propaganda performed in Solomon Islands. Earlier pagan stage was opposed to the later illuminated Christian era. “Former savagery is dramatized and juxtaposed with a subsequently elevated and purified Christian state. This is not just a matter of religious change but of wider social transformation.”²⁵⁸ According to the missionaries the main reason for depopulation in Hawaii was warfare and infanticide.²⁵⁹ Actually there is no convincing evidence for the practise of infanticide, all the reports that exist are either written by missionaries or newly converted natives.²⁶⁰ The opinion the missionaries held about Hawaiian people did not improve much after the conversion either. They protected their own children from native influences and did not under any circumstances allow marriages between the Hawaiians and themselves. Sometime in 1860s the chiefs suggested that the daughters of the missionaries could marry princes Alexander Liholiho and Lot, but even such distinguished proposal was not accepted. A missionary, Samuel G. Dwight, who married a Hawaiian woman, was dismissed from the mission.²⁶¹

The arrival of missionaries and their wives was of great interest to the Hawaiians. Laura F. Judd who arrived with the second group of missionaries wrote in her diary: “Kaahumanu treated us like pet children, examined our eyes and hair, felt our arms, critisized our dress” and that she requested that “one of our numbers must belong exlusively to her, and instruct her women in all domestic matters so that she can live as we do”.²⁶² The most interesting novelty for the Hawaiians was the knowledge of reading and writing. The missionaries were eager to teach the native people these skills because they considered them to be a necessary tool in spreading the new religion. Large numbers of the Hawaiians, both chiefs and commoners became literate in very short time. “It is astonishing how so many have learned to read with so few books”, Laura F. Judd noted in

²⁵⁷ Kame’eleihiwa 1992, p. 139

²⁵⁸ Thomas 2000, p. 231

²⁵⁹ Ellis 2004, p. 23

²⁶⁰ Trask 2002, p. 129-130

²⁶¹ Daws 1974, p. 164

²⁶² Judd 1994, p.59

her diary, and added: “Some read equally well with the book upside down or sideways, as four or five of them learn from the same book with one teacher, crowding around him as closely as possible.”²⁶³

The conversion

The missionaries soon discovered that female chiefs were powerful and influential, and it was Ka‘ahumanu, Keōpūolani and the other queens they had to persuade to conversion.²⁶⁴ Ka‘ahumanu was very sceptical to the new religion at first, but a number of events the following years changed her mind. In 1821 she fell seriously ill and during her sickness she was frequently visited and prayed for by one of the missionaries, Hiram Bingham and his wife. Then Keōpūolani, inspired by three Tahitian converts whom she invited to her home, became a follower of the new religion before she died in 1823.²⁶⁵ In 1824 a rebellion on Kaua‘i was subdued with the assistance of missionary advisors and chiefs who had already become Christians. Ka‘ahumanu attributed this victory to the mana of the foreign god and finally became an eager student of the missionary teachings.²⁶⁶

The reasons royal women had for adopting Christianity might have been both political and religious. Kame‘eleihiwa argues that “Christianity had replaced Kū and Lono as a new path to mana”.²⁶⁷ Widows of Kamehameha were genealogically entitled to rule the kingdom and the responsibility for maintaining the state of pono belonged to them.²⁶⁸ Nāmāhana, Ka‘ahumanu’s younger sister, told a foreign guest that she considered Christianity the most reasonable belief, but if “it should be found unsuited to our people, we will reject it, and adopt another.”²⁶⁹ With the kapu and traditional worship system abolished, the royal women might have seen Christianity as a valid source of

²⁶³ Judd 1994, p.67

²⁶⁴ Grimshaw 1989, p. 27

²⁶⁵ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p. 143

²⁶⁶ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p. 153

²⁶⁷ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p. 154

²⁶⁸ Sahlins 2000, p. 197

²⁶⁹ Kotzebue 1994, p. 39

mana and a new system for ordering of the society. According to Sahlins “these women had taken charge of the ritual tabus – namely, the Protestant tabus”.²⁷⁰ Hiram Bingham, the leader of the missionary group had in Hawaiian eyes become the new Kahuna Nui, a figure of religious as well as political significance.²⁷¹ The fact that chiefly women yet again appear in the lead in directing such major ideological change, Sahlins explains as logical within Hawaiian structure:

“The tabu system was not totally abolished in 1819. Rather, it was preserved in a transported form. It is only consistent that Ka‘ahumanu should have presided over the transformation, since the ritual mediation between the states of tabu and noa (ordinary), or more generally between the divine and the human, was traditionally a work of women, especially chiefly women.”²⁷²

Kame‘eleihiwa suggests that because of the decrease of the Hawaiian population the new religion’s promise of salvation and resurrection must have seemed attractive: “...this was the way to salvation of the Hawaiian race, for Hawaiians did not distinguish between the spiritual and physical salvation of the race. To Hawaiians and to the missionaries they were one and the same.”²⁷³ The chiefs believed that by living and worshipping like the foreigners the Hawaiian people would survive. When the physician Dr. Judd came with the second group of the missionaries, one of the Hawaiians exclaimed, “We are healed”.²⁷⁴

The promise of the two-fold salvation was also enforced by the metaphor of the book. “In the colonial imagination, the possession of books was a mark of superiority, even for deities, and thus one that the native akua distinctly lacked.” The missionaries proclaimed that: “The names of the righteous (pono people) will be written inside the book of life”.²⁷⁵

²⁷⁰ Sahlins 2000, p.197

²⁷¹ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p.139

²⁷² Sahlins 1992, p. 73

²⁷³ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p.145

²⁷⁴ Judd 1994, p. 62

²⁷⁵ Silva 2004 p. 33

Christianity and Hawaiian values

The missionaries adopted many of Hawaiian concepts in their way of presenting Christian theology to the native people. Some of these concepts or metaphors acquired a different meaning during this process. Pono was by the missionaries translated as “righteousness”. Traditionally a term describing the ideal state of the society in the times of ‘aikapu became a description of Christian morality. “Rightness meant something different in the two worlds, but the missionaries were able, in barely questioned translation, to appropriate this powerful term – an appropriation that would have radical consequences.”²⁷⁶ It seems quite ironic that having arrived just after the abolition of “idolatry” and ‘aikapu: “The missionaries joined the Hawaiians in using the concept of tabu, and not ritually only but in the form of the chiefly authorizations and sanctifications”.²⁷⁷ The translating of the concept of aloha as Christian idea of agape became the first transformation of this Hawaiian metaphor. According to George Kanahele: “Agape superimposed upon aloha meant that aloha became a higher form of giving, without expectation of receiving anything in return.” This “took away aloha’s strong emphasis on reciprocity”.²⁷⁸ Reciprocity was not very highly valued by the missionaries anyway, because it was not considered compatible with industriousness. The missionaries grew impatient with the Hawaiian tradition of sharing the surplus instead of saving or investing it.²⁷⁹ Another dimension added to aloha was the Christian idea of “love of humankind” which propagated the equality of all humans in the eyes of God, which in Hawaii conflicted to some extent with the established hierarchy of the society. According to Kanahele this was the “seed” of future Constitution and democracy, although he doubts if this concept of equality was ever accepted by the chiefs.²⁸⁰

Because religion used to be such an integral part of daily life in Hawaii, after the conversion to Christianity almost every aspect of native culture was condemned as “pagan practise”. The missionaries discouraged all “sinful” activities, such as surfing and

²⁷⁶ Silva 2004, p. 33

²⁷⁷ Sahlins 1992, p. 72

²⁷⁸ Kanahele 2002, p. 206

²⁷⁹ Grimshaw 1989, p. 168-169

²⁸⁰ Kanahele 2002, p. 206

swimming, since they involved a certain degree of nudity. Hula was of course labelled an evil “idolatrous dance” because of its ritual dimension.²⁸¹ Newly converted Hawaiians considered even kapa making a “devilish” practise.²⁸² Ellis was very pleased with the mission’s progress, he wrote that: “most happy moral and domestic change in the character of many of the people, whose advancement in the arts of civilised life, as well as Christian knowledge, is truly gratifying”, and further: “Several have forsaken their grass huts, and erected comfortable stone or wooden houses”.²⁸³ Kamakau also initially approved of the change and the fact that Hawaiians would now be able “to eat together with the nations of the world that eat without tabus without disassociating themselves from God. A kingdom that eats without tabus is a good kingdom.”²⁸⁴ For many other native people, Christianity brought nothing but confusion and sorrow. Princess Nāhi‘ena‘ena, daughter of Kamehameha and Keōpūolani, was initially married to her brother Kauikeaouli. The new religion forbade the Hawaiian tradition of chiefly incest, but despite new marriage arrangements made for the royal siblings, they continued their sexual relationship. Torn between the new and old ideology Nāhi‘ena‘ena wrote to Mrs. Stewart, a missionary wife; “One day my thoughts are fixed on God; another day I am ensnared: and thus it is continually.”²⁸⁵

²⁸¹ Ellis 2004, p.63

²⁸² Green 2002, p. 243

²⁸³ Ellis 2004, p. 17

²⁸⁴ Kamakau 1987, p. 145

²⁸⁵ Sinclair 1995, p. 122

5. Secular Values, Religion & Politics

A Christian Kingdom

After Kamehameha's death and until the overthrow of monarchy in 1893, Hawaiian kingdom repeatedly experienced the threat of foreign powers. The preservation of native sovereignty became a constant challenge to every succeeding monarch. The increasing foreign settlement and the problems connected to it resulted in several changes in the kingdom's government. Resident merchants and other investors achieved a considerable amount of economical influence and power, because of the enormous debts of the chiefs. Decrease of the Hawaiian population and the threat of colonisation by foreign military powers like happened with other Polynesian nations, created a need for Hawaiian kingdom to be acknowledged internationally as a sovereign state.

Embracing Western ideas such as Christianity became an important tool for Hawaiians in the process of proving that their kingdom was civilised and fit to be independent. Hawaiian chiefs were forced to rely on foreign advisors to learn how to manage this growing population of immigrants. The missionaries were in majority among these advisors. Kamakau wrote that Ka'ahumanu: "believed that it was through adherence to the Bible teaching that the government of her king would be lasting"²⁸⁶ As a result of the guidance of the missionaries the political and economical system changed dramatically. First a Western styled legislature was implemented, followed by the first Hawaiian constitution in 1840 and later privatisation of land. Christianity became in great degree the ideological basis for the modern Hawaiian government. The first decree of the first Hawaiian Constitution was: "That no law shall be enacted which is at variance with the word of the Lord Jehovah, or at variance with the general spirit of His word. All laws of the Islands shall be in consistency with the general spirit of God's law."²⁸⁷

Many of these adaptations to Western life-style proved later to be disastrous for native people and the preservation of sovereignty. The foreigners on the other hand benefited greatly, both in terms of political power and wealth. The division and

²⁸⁶ Kamakau 1992 (Ruling Chiefs of Hawaii), p.307

²⁸⁷ Constitution of 1840, <http://www.hawaii-nation.org/constitution-1840.html>

privatisation of land called Māhele²⁸⁸ is by many historians seen as the beginning of the end of Hawaiian Kingdom.

From rural to urban life

Influenced by mercantile ideas, European countries and New England wanted rather to exchange a product instead paying in silver for Chinese luxury items (tea, silk, and porcelain). Sandalwood found in Hawaii and some other Pacific Islands was that product that showed to be very desirable in China. The trade with sandalwood in Hawaii started about 1810 and it opened new possibilities for the chiefs of purchasing Western symbols of status such as expensive clothes, weapons and ships. When sandalwood-forests were exhausted, Western economy showed another interest in Hawaii: as a supply station. With its strategic location in the middle of the Pacific and rich fresh water resources, Hawaii became a perfect place to refill supplies for the whaling ships and also to let them rest there in the winter time. Many Hawaiian commoners were involved in whaling industry, both on ships, as workers in the harbours or raising food supplies. The period of whaling lasted from 1829 to 1843, and during that time many foreigners settled permanently in Hawaii. The first urban centres developed and changed the structure of the traditionally agricultural Hawaiian society. When the whaling era ended because of discovery of new oil sources, the foreign settlers showed an interest in the land itself. After the privatisation of land the sugar plantations became the main investment of the foreigners.²⁸⁹

The development of cities, trade with Western countries and introduction of money economy changed the traditional work tasks of men and women. Introduction of imported fabric made eventually women's kapa making obsolete. In rural areas women still made kapa by the middle of the 19th century, but after the privatisation of land many Hawaiians lost access to areas where the wauke plant (of which kapa was made) grew, resulting in decline in native cloth production.²⁹⁰ Many commoner men engaged in paid

²⁸⁸ Māhele means "division", but rather in the sense of "dividing to share", not "divide to separate" – Kame'eleihiwa 1992, p. 9

²⁸⁹ Kent 1993, p. 17-24, 35

²⁹⁰ Linnekin 1990, p. 173-177

labour in the cities or signed up on the whaling ships. As a result of this many women overtook the responsibility for the agriculture even on the islands where this was not usual in the times of aikapu. According to Linnekin, in many colonised societies the women's dependency on men increased as a result of introduction of money economy and the decline in traditional production, but this was not the case in Hawaii, as she argues. Despite the fact that mats and kapa made by women were earlier highly valued, the native ideas of rank within the family overshadowed the importance of money. The idea of service owed by the young to the old persisted even when the young people engaged in paid work.²⁹¹ Further Linnekin does not believe that men alone were engaged in money economy. Some women went to the cities like the men and took paid jobs. During the whaling period when many ships picked up their supplies in the islands, some Hawaiian women found another source of income - prostitution.

Despite the missionary inspired laws, "prostitution" was too important for commerce to be seriously prosecuted. "Whether or not this seasonal pastime deserved the name of prostitution it was certainly a big business."²⁹² The trade of sexual services was originally a foreign idea in Hawaii. British seamen, who came to the islands with Captain Cook, were exposed to quite aggressive advances made by the native women. What surprised the foreigners was that unlike any other experience they had, Hawaiian women did not demand or expect any "payment". Hawaiian sexual politics and ideas of 'imihaku were not yet analysed by post-modern scholars and were certainly unknown to the explorers. The "prostitution" developed because the sailors insisted on "payments", "the British seamen knew how to repay the services done to them; more precisely, they reified the women's embraces as "services" by the gifts they made in return."²⁹³ Daws, who believed that Hawaiian women were previously considered inferior, even suggested that "because a woman's body was the most saleable of commodities" the access to Western goods increased women's influence and power.²⁹⁴

²⁹¹ Linnekin 1990, p. 157

²⁹² Daws 1974, p. 166

²⁹³ Sahlins 1985, p. 6

²⁹⁴ Daws 1974, p. 57

The advisors and the advice

In 1839 Catholic missionaries from France wanted to establish a mission in Hawaii. They were at first expelled as a result of the advice from Calvinist missionaries who were already influential in the islands. But when a French warship demanded rights for the Catholic priests, the Hawaiian kingdom was forced to yield. The constant threats of similar kind of “gun diplomacy” created a need of recognition of Hawaii as an independent country, because as Silva wrote: “nations not recognized and accepted into the family of nations were vulnerable to colonization.” On another occasion a British captain, Lord George Paulet, forced king Kamehameha III (Kauikeaouli) to cede the kingdom under threat of war. After an appeal to the British government Hawaiian sovereignty was restored and a few months later Hawaii was recognised as an independent nation by Great Britain, France and (verbally only) by USA.²⁹⁵

Chiefs and especially royal family have had many foreign counsellors functioning as the teachers of Western political and economical ideas since the times of Kamehameha. Representatives of the mission were not supposed to hold any political positions in Hawaiian kingdom. Therefore those of the missionaries, who became private counsellors of the chiefs or became part of the government as ministers, severed their official bonds with the mission. One of the most prominent of these advisors was Dr. Gerrit Judd who came to Hawaii as a missionary but later became so influential within Hawaiian politics that resident merchants ironically nick-named him “King Judd”.²⁹⁶ In native eyes the political influence of the missionaries might not have seemed out of place as religion and politics were never distinguishably apart in the traditional society when the priests legitimised the power of chiefs.²⁹⁷ “The Hawaiian cosmological order was the condition of the possibility of missionary “interference” in government.” The chiefs referred to the missionaries as their kahuna. Traditionally “the priests mediated the transfer of divine sovereignty to the conquering king”, they were not only legitimising the

²⁹⁵ Silva 2004, p. 35-37

²⁹⁶ Sahlins 2000, p. 190

²⁹⁷ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p.156

power of the ruling king but they might also act as “conspirators on behalf of would-be kings”.²⁹⁸

To Western businessmen, though, such a mixture of religion in state affairs was alarming. In 1825 Ka‘ahumanu imposed laws based on Christian moral code, these laws were called prohibitory or sumptuary laws.²⁹⁹ Prohibition of alcohol, prostitution, hula and gambling resulted in violent riots on the part of visiting sailors and caused the foreign investors to worry.³⁰⁰ Merchants rather preferred the Islands without missionaries’ influence, because the entertainment provided for the sailors was an important aspect of the developing commerce.³⁰¹ To foreign consuls who tried to convince Ka‘ahumanu that other Christian countries did not have such strict laws, she replied: “We do not rule there, but these islands are ours, and we wish to obey the commands of God”.³⁰² Complaints about missionaries’ influence such as: “They seem to be more fit to have lived a century and a half ago when the world was not so enlightened as it is at present”³⁰³ were not uncommon. The foreign investors who settled in Hawaii considered themselves “agents of modernity” and they were great supporters of separating religious matters from politics and commerce.³⁰⁴ Sahlins commented that “the merchants never had much regard for the missionaries, whom they accused of enlightening the Hawaiians too much in commercial affairs and diverting native labor from cutting sandalwood to building churches.”³⁰⁵ The merchants craved progress on purely economical level. Hawaiian chiefs on the other hand consciously allied themselves with the missionaries and embraced their religious and political teachings in order to protect themselves and the sovereignty of the country against the growing power of merchants and other investors to whom the kingdom was already greatly indebted.³⁰⁶ As Kīna‘u, the successor of Ka‘ahumanu to the office of

²⁹⁸ Sahlins 1992, p. 68

²⁹⁹ Osorio 2002, p. 11

³⁰⁰ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p. 87

³⁰¹ Sahlins 2000, p. 191

³⁰² quoted in Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p. 157

³⁰³ quoted in Sahlins 2000, p. 192

³⁰⁴ Sahlins 2000, p. 192

³⁰⁵ Sahlins 1992, p. 73

³⁰⁶ Sahlins 2000, p. 190-191

kuhina nui, said: “our people we can easily manage, but foreigners are too much for us”.³⁰⁷

Although it seems perfectly reasonable that Hawaiian chiefs allied themselves with the advisors from the missionary camp rather than the merchants, the new laws did not necessarily improve the life of commoners. Among other things the sumptuary laws forbade “fornication”, meaning that all sex outside the proper monogamous marriage was outlawed.³⁰⁸ The missionaries complained that Hawaiians had about twenty words for different kinds of sex, so the translation of the 7. Commandment proved very difficult and finally ended up with forbidding “moe kolohe” (mischievous sleeping).³⁰⁹ “In a puritan code, anything other than heterosexual man-on-top intercourse was thought to be sodomy.”³¹⁰ The ban on chants and hula was disastrous for the Hawaiian culture because as Elizabeth Buck reminds, they were “the ideological center and the primary reservoir of social knowledge and history”.³¹¹ “These laws not only altered traditional morality and custom, but also resulted in the Natives’ abnegation of their own culture and values as well as in their reliance on foreigners to tell them what was pono.”³¹² “In translating Christian sins into social “crimes”, especially in matters of sexuality, the Hawaiian way of life itself was rendered culpable.”³¹³ It was no wonder perhaps that the native people began to express their resistance to these new and hostile kapu. Other brands of Christianity, such as Catholicism became the “resistance” religion of commoners.³¹⁴ Inspiration from abroad brought messianic cults, native prophets tried to revive ancient practices and some novel versions of the old worship appeared in rural areas. Among these was a “Kamuela woman, calling herself Lono, who spearheaded a revivalist movement on Oahu’s North Shore in 1845.”³¹⁵ Many commoners and even some chiefs

³⁰⁷ quoted in Sahlins 2000, p. 207

³⁰⁸ Osorio 2002, p. 58

³⁰⁹ Sahlins 1985, p. 10

³¹⁰ Pukui 1979, Nana I Ke Kumu vol II 1979, p. 109

³¹¹ Buck 1993, p. 102

³¹² Osorio 2002, p. 11

³¹³ Sahlins 1992, p. 153

³¹⁴ Sahlins 1992, p. 160-161

³¹⁵ Kent 1993, p. 33

continued to indulge in traditional pleasures such as surfing, dancing hula, kiting and playing games and these “soon became significant modes of political opposition, not to mention essentializations of Hawaiian culture that continue to this day”.³¹⁶

The Constitution

In 1824 king Liholiho and his wife Kamamalu died of measles while visiting the king of England and Kauikeaouli, another of Kamehameha’s sons, who at the time was still a child became Hawaii’s new ruler. Ka’ahumanu continued her regency until her death in 1832. Her political office of kuhina nui was then taken over by Kīna‘u, one of her female relatives. During Kauikeaouli’s and Kīna‘u’s reign the first Hawaiian constitution was conceived under guidance of William Richards, who was another important advisor to the ruling family and a former missionary. The Christian laws earlier adopted as a replacement of the kapu now became a part of a Western inspired legislature. The religious aspect of this new political system was certainly important to Hawaiians. Kamakau wrote that: “chiefs and commoners rejoiced because they had a constitution based upon the Holy Scripture”.³¹⁷ Some Hawaiians were hoping that the Western inspired legislature system would bring: “success, comfort, and progress of the race in just dealing and in developing sources of wealth and increase of population” and the state of pono would hopefully be achieved again.³¹⁸ The form of the new political system was foreign, but native ideas were preserved to some extent especially in form of female presence in the government. In Hawaiian tradition “Ali‘i wahine had always been part of government”.³¹⁹ During the first years of the constitutional kingdom, chiefly women still held political power, but after Kauikeaouli’s death female public presence in the government was diminished as a result of even more increased foreign influence with its “patriarchal social codes”.³²⁰ Still, this new and unfamiliar political system gave

³¹⁶ Sahlins 1992, p. 73

³¹⁷ Kamakau 1992 (Ruling Chiefs of Hawaii), p. 370

³¹⁸ Kamakau 1992 (Ruling Chiefs of Hawaii), p. 371

³¹⁹ Silva 2004, p. 38

³²⁰ Silva 2004, p. 43-44

Hawaiians hope that perhaps the colonisation by foreign powers would be prevented.³²¹ “Haole working for the government were more than a talisman to keep the foreign powers at bay. They were the evidence that some kind of sharing could take place without loosing everything” at least in the early 19th century before the Māhele. As long as the king and the chiefs still controlled the land, the foreigners in the government were not considered a threat but rather useful mediators of the Western powers.³²²

Native and Protestant metaphors of prosperity – the Māhele

Protestant values of hard work, moral conduct and the following prosperity did to some extent correspond with kapu system and native ideas of acquiring mana and a state of pono. Other concepts of missionaries’ teachings differed fundamentally from Hawaiian. The most significant of them was the idea of private property and especially accumulating of wealth since Hawaiians traditionally demonstrated prosperity rather by redistributing their wealth. “Hawaiians were not culturally predisposed to capitalism. They could not fully comprehend a system wherein profit – that is, the denial of one’s surplus for another’s use – was more important than unstinting generosity.”³²³ The land, being a sacred ancestor, could not be privately owned and the chiefs’ control of the natural resources was always understood as temporal care taking. “Untroubled by Judeo-Christian theology that placed human beings in a position of dominance over the earth and its other creatures, Hawaiian political systems favored not one political class over another, but the land – ‘āina – over the others.”³²⁴ Traditional Hawaiian land tenure was not comparable to European feudalism. Land in Hawaii was traditionally not a matter of ownership or fixed inheritance. Each mō‘ī divided the rights to supervise the land between the chiefs on his or hers ascent to power. The land was therefore never fixed property of any family line.³²⁵ The commoners were not bound to the land like the

³²¹ Silva 2004, p. 37

³²² Osorio 2002, p. 37-38

³²³ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p. 297-298

³²⁴ Osorio 2002, p. 49

³²⁵ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p. 51-52

peasants in the European feudal system, they were free to move.³²⁶ After king Kamehameha had concluded the conquest of all the islands, he allowed for the first change in land rights of his followers, giving them the right to name a heir for the land so it would pass within the same family and not be a subject to redistribution by the new king.³²⁷ This practise of inheritance became usual after Kamehameha's death (Liholiho did not redistribute land), but it was still far from the idea of ownership. The inheritance of the rights to land was based on verbal will. Usually the heir was the child or one of the siblings of the deceased, rarely the spouse. Land could also be given as a gift.³²⁸ Among the high chiefs the land was controlled in equal degree by men and women, although Kame'eleihiwa shows that women were slightly favoured as heirs.³²⁹ The hierarchy of the social classes was also different from Medieval Europe, in Hawaii it was based on ideas of reciprocity similar to the family hierarchy.³³⁰ One of the native cultural metaphors was the relationship to land. According to Kame'eleihiwa the foreigners used the Hawaiian word "mālama" in the meaning of owning in the context of land issues, while the native word means: to care for.³³¹

In the missionary eyes the Hawaiian land was obviously not cared for in the "civilised" way. Ellis observed that:

"Large tracts of fertile land lie waste in most of the islands; and sugar-cane, together with cotton, coffee, and other valuable inter-tropical productions, might be easily raised in considerable quantities, which will, probably, be the ease when the natives become more industrious and civilized."

He also noted that the location of the islands is of strategic importance for the commerce with Asia, South America and USA.³³² The privatisation of land was inevitable. In 1848

³²⁶ Trask 1999, p. 5

³²⁷ Kame'eleihiwa 1992, p. 58-62

³²⁸ Kame'eleihiwa 1992, p. 99

³²⁹ Kame'eleihiwa 1992, p. 133

³³⁰ Buck 1993, p. 37 and Silva 2004, p. 39

³³¹ Kame'eleihiwa 1992, p. 32-33

³³² Ellis 2004, p. 25

the chiefs finally yielded to the foreign advisors and Māhele, the division of land was performed. According to Osorio “The Māhele was a foreign solution to the problem of managing lands increasingly emptied of people.” Because the Hawaiian population had decreased so dramatically, the land was not cultivated extensively enough for the nation to remain self-sufficient.³³³ But even though the Hawaiians were so few, the majority of them ended up without land after the Māhele. They did not fully understand the concept of owning land in fee simple and some considered it inappropriate to claim their shares. Others could not afford to pay the fees required for claims.³³⁴ Another problem was that only actively cultivated land could be claimed. The access to uncultivated areas, which were used for gathering, was lost.³³⁵ “Ironically, the extent of Hawaiian land alienation after the Māhele reveals that the commoners were actually more secure in their tenure as tenants under the chiefs than they were as private owners of small holdings”.³³⁶

The very missionaries who advised Hawaiian chiefs about the necessity of private ownership laws became in the end wealthy land owners themselves, leaving the native commoners dispossessed.³³⁷ The clergymen became secular businessmen and as Sahlins states dramatically about the status quo in the time of Māhele: “Soon a kind of truce would be concluded between the residents (how the foreign merchants referred to themselves) and the missionaries - over the prostrate bodies of the chiefs and the people.”³³⁸ And the Hawaiian people seemed to know that something of the sort was about to happen. They frequently petitioned to the king expressing their worry about foreigners gaining the right to own land and become citizens.³³⁹

³³³ Osorio 2002, p. 49

³³⁴ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992 p. 295-298

³³⁵ Linnekin 1990, p. 90-91

³³⁶ Linnekin 1990, p. 187

³³⁷ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p.301-307

³³⁸ Sahlins 2000, p. 192

³³⁹ Petitions of 1845, appendix in Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p.331-333

Women and politics

According to “the 1840 Constitution, the king could not act without the knowledge and approbation of the Kuhina Nui”.³⁴⁰ It was Ka‘ahumanu who strengthened the office of kuhina nui by proclaiming co-rule with the king. In the first part of the 19th century, when native Hawaiians were still strongly represented in their own government, chiefly women held many important positions of power. Some were elected for the House of Nobles while others acted as governors of the islands, for example Liliha on O‘ahu, Kekauonohi on Kaua‘i, and Ruth Ke‘elikōlani on Hawai‘i. The position of kuhina nui was also usually assigned to women.³⁴¹ Even later in the 19th century, when female presence along with native presence in the elective bodies of the government in general, declined due to the growing domination of the foreigners, the few remaining positions of power were open to women. When Kamehameha IV’s successor Alexander Liholiho (Kamehameha IV) died in 1864, there were several legitimate heirs to the throne, three of them were women. Because his rank was superior, Lota Kapuāiwa inherited the crown and became Kamehameha V. He asked Bernice Pauahi to become his heir, but she declined the offer. Osorio commented that: “American law might not have been willing to legitimate female authority in 1872, but the king had rather little problem with it.” Under Lota’s reign the office of kuhina nui was terminated, but as Osorio argues the purpose of this change was to strengthen the position of the king, not undermine female leadership.³⁴² High chiefs and chiefesses alike were educated in Western political forms in order to be prepared to rule.³⁴³

The “domestication” of the native woman

The missionaries had a direct influence over the high ranking women connected to the royal court. In order to reach out with the Christian teachings to the rest of the population, in the 1850s the missionaries began publishing newspapers filled with articles about the proper morality and behaviour expected of the new converts. Imposing of the Western

³⁴⁰ Osorio 2002, p. 114

³⁴¹ Silva 2004, p. 38

³⁴² Osorio 2002, p. 113-115

³⁴³ Osorio 2002, p. 116

gender roles, including the housekeeping duties of women, was among the central messages in these newspapers. The nature of these publications was political as well. The newspaper articles propagated the superiority of Western culture by condemning the ways of the various “uncivilised” nations.³⁴⁴ Missionary wives were also crucial in spreading Christian ideals among the people. Their exemplary behaviour as dutiful and humble Christians was meant to serve as inspiration to Hawaiian women. One of the goals of the missionaries was to reform native family, including the “domestication” of women.

Hawaiian practise of polygamy, incest among the chiefs, and the generally relaxed attitudes to sex truly horrified the missionaries. The introduction of the “proper” Christian marriage was supposed to put an end to all the ongoing “adultery”. Only monogamous unions formalised by a missionary or a chief and in the presence of witnesses, were considered acceptable. Still, the missionaries struggled with making the Hawaiians understand the Christian meaning and significance of the marriage.³⁴⁵ Because Hawaiian traditional fashion provided “incitement to erotic impulses” as the missionaries saw it, “to counteract adultery, mission wives undertook an energetic campaign to keep people clothed”.³⁴⁶ Many of the traditional activities that Hawaiian women enjoyed earlier, such as surfing, were made impossible by the Western long dresses and the ban on nudity.³⁴⁷ But even the covering of the native bodies was not sufficient in the process of civilising the Hawaiians. The missionaries’ ideal of woman was first of all “meek” and “obedient”. But the personality alone was not enough to alter, Hawaiian bodies too had to adapt to the puritan ideology.³⁴⁸ In Hawaii, a plump woman was considered momona (sweet) and attractive. In the Calvinist eyes, indulging with food was considered sinful and so a generous body size was an evidence of a sinful life. “As they partook of

³⁴⁴ Silva 2004, p. 57-61

³⁴⁵ Grimshaw 1989, p. 161-162

³⁴⁶ Grimshaw 1989, p. 164

³⁴⁷ Grimshaw 1989, p. 167

³⁴⁸ Green 2002, p. 243

Christianity to fit their souls to the Western model, dieting was a way to alter their bodies to fit the ideal image of Western womanhood.”³⁴⁹

The missionaries formalised the sexuality in form of “proper” marriage, but the idea of the wife’s submission to her husband proved very difficult to impose. Hawaiian women were not easily submitted to their husbands, especially chiefly women would “usurp reigns of government over large districts”, while all native women might engage in “competition for supremacy” with their husbands.³⁵⁰ Missionaries preferred that native women did not preserve their own names after marriage, but rather attach the word “wahine” (wife/woman) to the husband’s name.³⁵¹ Missionary wives soon discovered that in Hawaii it was considered “disgraceful for females to work”, especially the chiefly females.³⁵² “None of them had been taught to work when young, and the women in particular remained bone idle in maturity, refusing even to learn cooking.”³⁵³ The missionaries even invented new housekeeping tasks for the Hawaiian women since they had the idea that the existing tasks were not enough to fill a proper wife’s day with proper work (and keep her in the house).³⁵⁴ The strong reciprocal link with their family of origin was another reason why Hawaiian women were not easily transformed into submissive wives. Duty to the family came before the husband and home. Hawaiian women were not used to asking for their husbands’ permission to travel where they pleased, nor were the husbands expecting it either.³⁵⁵ The very fact that Hawaiian women had to be taught submissiveness implies that they were perhaps not as subdued by the traditional system as the missionaries, and other foreigners, argued.

All these attacks on native values evoked defiance and the first Hawaiian newspaper independent of missionary influence was established in 1861 as an arena for

³⁴⁹ Green 2002, p. 244

³⁵⁰ Grimshaw 1989, p. 165-166

³⁵¹ Grimshaw 1989, p. 166

³⁵² Grimshaw 1989, p. 45

³⁵³ Grimshaw 1989, p. 111

³⁵⁴ Grimshaw 1989, p. 169-170

³⁵⁵ Grimshaw 1989, p. 168

opposition to cultural and political dominance.³⁵⁶ Through this new media, Hawaiian people cultivated their legends and stories, discussed politics and expressed their national pride. Especially the great variety of myths and legends published in the independent newspapers, presented an alternative to the “proper behaviour” that was preached by the missionaries and helped the Hawaiians to preserve their cultural identity. In these texts women were presented as the very opposite of the “domesticated” wives. They were “not cooking, cleaning house, nor worrying about husbands” but were rather “strong, unruly and independent”. Goddesses such as Pele and her sisters represented powerful role models. The morality in these legends was not connected to the sexual behaviour but to proper observance of customs connected to food and religion. Very different, more westernised versions of the same legends were published in the government newspapers.³⁵⁷

Did the “domestication” fail?

The foreign gender ideology was in many ways forced on the native society and despite the resistance some of the structures concerning gender actually changed. Some of the new laws restricted the traditional organisation of the family. The sexual politics, or the path of Lono, were replaced by the foreign concept of prostitution. The native ideas of a woman’s role in the family and society were under constant attack from the missionaries. The conversion was supposed to extend beyond the religious beliefs and bring a change of the whole cultural and political system in Hawaii. Grimshaw believes that the missionary wives played a major role in imposing such transformation on the domestic level while their husbands worked towards the same goal in the political sphere.³⁵⁸ The extensive “Westernising” of Hawaiian women did, according to Grimshaw, have some positive side effects:

“Utterly ethnocentric as the American women clearly were, they nevertheless offered Hawaiian women something valuable. Faced with a new order which remorselessly invaded their world,

³⁵⁶ Silva 1997, p. 6

³⁵⁷ Silva 2004, p. 83-84

³⁵⁸ Grimshaw 1989, p. 113-127

Hawaiian women were offered by the mission wives an introduction to a range of skills and a model of feminine behavior which could provide them with a competency to survive and negotiate their changing environment.”³⁵⁹

It seems unlikely though that the idea of sex hierarchy was fully adopted by Hawaiians even as they adopted the new gender roles to some extent. Again the high-ranking women seemed to observe the new Christian moral code in greater degree than the common women. Interestingly, the very value of rank in all social strata seemed to preserve the traditional symmetry of gender and sex relations in native culture. The “happy transformation” of the family life and work division praised by the foreigners in the 19th century does not seem to extend to Christian ideas of “proper” hierarchy between men and women.

“There appears to have been some dissonance, in other words, between women’s legal disabilities and their active role and valuation within the rural, commoner Hawaiian community, as well as between women’s legal standing and the actual political power of high-ranking chiefesses through the nineteenth century.”³⁶⁰

³⁵⁹ Grimshaw 1989, p. 155

³⁶⁰ Linnekin 1990, p. 227

6. Hawaiian Resistance

Political situation

The line of Kamehameha ended in 1872 and there was no named heir for the throne. William Lunalilo was the first elected king, but his rule was short, he died in 1873. In 1874 Kalākaua became king after winning the election over Queen Emma, widow of Alexander Liholiho. Kalākaua was not directly related to Kamehameha, he was of Keaweheulu lineage.³⁶¹ During his reign, he initiated a massive revival of Hawaiian traditions, including the ones previously forbidden under the “missionary rule”. The celebration of the native culture and values were an expression of the developing Hawaiian nationalism. At the same time the political power of the monarch was exposed to continual challenge by the foreign settlers. Kalākaua’s critics, who believed that his lavish lifestyle and the frequent festivals arranged by him, were evidences of the king’s irresponsibility, called him the “Merrie Monarch”. Ironically, the nickname was adopted by the Hawaiians as a rather positive term, symbolic of the king’s efforts to preserve ancient traditions. Today the Merrie Monarch Festival is a prestigious hula competition.³⁶²

After it became possible for foreign investors to buy land in Hawaii, the age of sugar plantations started. The winners in the growing competition of the plantation business were the so-called “Big Five” companies, C. Brewer, T. Davies, Alexander & Baldwin, Castle & Cooke and H. Hackfeld (later American Factors). These companies were composed of foreign land-owning families, some of which were descendants of the missionaries.³⁶³ These became the greatest threat to Hawaiian sovereignty. As Silva put it: “It was also Kalākaua’s misfortune that the sons of the first missionaries came fully of age during his reign.”³⁶⁴ Great numbers of Asian contract workers were brought from China and Japan to be employed in the sugar cane fields. Native Hawaiians were in the end outnumbered by the immigrants to become a minority in their own islands. In 1890

³⁶¹ Silva 2004, p. 91

³⁶² Buck 1993, p. 156

³⁶³ Kent 1993, p.37-38

³⁶⁴ Silva 2004, p. 89-90

the population consisted of 89.000 people, of which 32 % were Asians, 45% Hawaiian and part-Hawaiian and 22% Caucasians.³⁶⁵ The mission ended in 1864, but the foreign cultural assault on native values continued. “Even those still concerned about public morality were less concerned with Christianizing than with Americanizing what was rapidly becoming an ethnically diverse island society.”³⁶⁶

The sugar planters were becoming very influential and the threat to the native sovereignty was not only external but now also internal. The plantation owners wanted to secure the American market for their sugar and in 1876 the reciprocity treaty was signed by king Kalākaua. The treaty secured duty-free trade with the US.³⁶⁷ In addition the right to the naval base in Pearl Harbor was given to the Americans, but the land around the harbour was not ceded at the time.³⁶⁸ Almost the whole of Hawaiian agriculture at this time centred on sugar cane because it was then the most profitable crop. According to Kent the reciprocity treaty hindered Hawaii in developing self-sustaining economy and the Americans saw it as a step towards annexation.³⁶⁹ As the next step a group that called themselves the Hawaiian League, mostly comprised of white businessmen, forced king Kalākaua to sign a new constitution in 1887, later named the Bayonet Constitution because it was signed under the threat of war. This new constitution severely reduced the king’s power and the people’s ability to qualify as voters. All of king’s decisions had to be approved by the cabinet, he could not appoint the House of Nobles and he could not dismiss the cabinet himself.³⁷⁰ Only the wealthy males of Hawaiian, American or European descent were allowed to vote. Asian residents, who previously had been recognised as citizens were denied voting rights. As Osorio argues, white foreigners had since the Bayonet Constitution gained the same political rights as the native Hawaiians. That is in theory, since the white foreign planters were wealthier than the native people,

³⁶⁵ Kent 1993, p. 60

³⁶⁶ Buck 1993, p. 156

³⁶⁷ Silva 2004, p. 125

³⁶⁸ Treaty of Reciprocity, <http://hawaii-nation.org/treaty1875.html>

³⁶⁹ Kent 1993, p. 46-47

³⁷⁰ Silva 2004, p. 122

they became the real power behind the weakened position of the king.³⁷¹ “It was the very first time that democratic rights were determined by race in any Hawaiian constitution.”³⁷²

National values and the modern kingdom

Despite the fact that Hawaii was a Christian kingdom, the old beliefs still persisted in rural areas. Christian Hawaiians too valued the ancient traditions if only as their folklore.³⁷³ A religious king was in Hawaiian logic a pono ruler, and so Kalākaua’s revival of old religious practises within a Christian frame made him very popular among his subjects.³⁷⁴ Kalākaua lived longer than any other king after Kamehameha I and “if nothing else his age alone was proof that the Akua found him pono”.³⁷⁵ At the time Hawaii was already so influenced by the West, that most of the institutions and organisations in the kingdom were based on Western structures.

“One could even say that their primary goal – national sovereignty – was structured by the West, for the “nation-state” was not an indigenous governmental form but rather was created out of the necessity of surviving as a people against the threats of armed nations of the West.”³⁷⁶

Kalākaua’s motto was “ho‘oulu lāhui”, to repopulate the nation (increase the lāhui or cause the lāhui to grow).³⁷⁷ Chants and hula were revived during Kalākaua’s reign not only as entertainment but also symbols of Hawaiian sovereignty.³⁷⁸ According to Kame‘eleihiwa, Kalākaua believed that if people were inspired to live, the nation would survive. The self-doubt inflicted by the Calvinists had to be rejected, so Kalākaua

³⁷¹ Osorio 2002, p. 239-245

³⁷² Osorio 2002, p. 244

³⁷³ Lili‘uokalani 1990, p. 72

³⁷⁴ Silva 2004, p. 121

³⁷⁵ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p. 313

³⁷⁶ Silva 2004, p. 162

³⁷⁷ Silva 2004, p. 101, lāhui = nation

³⁷⁸ Buck 1993, p. 155

proclaimed the “excellence of Hawaiian culture and he laughed at the suggestion of Hawaiian “savagery””.³⁷⁹

The process of legitimising Hawaiian sovereignty involved presenting Hawaiian kingdom as a modern and highly civilised state. Seeing the growing threat of annexation, Kalākaua travelled literally around the world to learn more about foreign cultures and negotiate the immigration of foreign labourers for the plantations. He visited Japan and China, among other countries, to negotiate the terms of immigration of plantation workers. Queen Lili‘uokalani argued that the criticism to which the king was subjected to because of the cost of his world tour, was most unjust. Those who opposed the king’s travels were the same wealthy planters who later profited from the cheap labour force, whose immigration was negotiated by Kalākaua in Asia. The Queen concluded that he made it possible for the sugar planters to grow rich and powerful. The planters should have been grateful, but instead they eventually overthrew the monarchy.³⁸⁰ Kalākaua made great efforts to show Hawaii as a sophisticated kingdom equal to the Western countries. The ‘Iolani Palace, rebuilt during his reign, had modern plumbing, telephone and electric lights even before the White House and only seven years after Edison invented the light bulb.³⁸¹

After his world tour, Kalākaua arranged a coronation ceremony for himself and his wife Queen Kapi‘olani. Although the coronation was a modern invention in Hawaii, the traditional elements such as a display of royal insignia, the feather kāhili stands and kapu-sticks, were woven in. There were hula performances with traditional chants and mele³⁸². The programme, in which texts of the chants and mele were printed, created quite a controversy. The texts were accused of being obscene, because they included hula ma‘i.³⁸³ According to Silva, the revival of traditional celebration of sexuality in hope of fertility revival was a reaction to the fact that Christianity failed to stop Hawaiian

³⁷⁹ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p.314

³⁸⁰ Lili‘uokalani 1990, p. 76-78

³⁸¹ Allen 1994, p. 135-136

³⁸² mele = song

³⁸³ Silva 2004, p. 109-110, hula ma‘i = a song in honour of the high chief’s (of either sex) genitals

population decrease.³⁸⁴ Queen Lili‘uokalani wrote in retrospect about the coronation ceremony of Kalākaua, which in particular earned a wave of criticism from the foreign residents: “It was wise and patriotic to spend money to awaken in the people a national pride. Naturally, those among us who did not desire to have Hawaii remain a nation would look on expenditure of this kind as worse than wasted.”³⁸⁵ Another occasion for celebration was the Jubilee – Kalākaua’s 50th birthday. The festivities included a parade, a foreign style ball, again there was hula and other performances such as historical tableaux. The parade was a display of ancient stories, people dressed like the chiefs of old.³⁸⁶ According to Silva, the jubilee performances were a display of masculine prowess of ancient Hawaiians balanced with hula performed by women. The reason behind the masculine theme was supposedly an attempt to win Western respect, and to show that Hawaiian nation was in the same league.³⁸⁷ In ancient times hula was performed by both men and women, but in the times of Kalākaua the missionaries had already managed to convince the Hawaiians that dancing was “especially inappropriate for true males”.³⁸⁸

Saving the heritage

Kalākaua defied the missionaries on numerous occasions. He published his genealogical chant Kumulipo and organised public hula events that were previously forbidden.³⁸⁹ During this period Hawaiian music changed from chant style to western inspired song style.³⁹⁰ Both Kalākaua and Lili‘uokalani were very musically talented, they played many instruments, wrote songs and composed music. So hula had a period of blooming development. The traditional and the Western elements of music were combined and created a new style of dance, hula ku‘i.³⁹¹ Kalākaua sponsored also the Royal Hawaiian

³⁸⁴ Silva 2004, p. 110

³⁸⁵ Lili‘uokalani 1990, p. 105

³⁸⁶ Silva 2004, p. 113-114

³⁸⁷ Silva 2004, p. 118

³⁸⁸ Robertson 2002, p. 264-265

³⁸⁹ Silva 2004, p. 89

³⁹⁰ Buck p. 107-111

³⁹¹ Silva 2004, p. 108

Band, that played foreign instruments and was led by Henry Berger, a German band master.³⁹² The blending of native and foreign elements in music left a heritage of compositions still popular today.

During Kalākaua's reign, several native organisations were instituted. Papa Kū'auhau o Nā Ali'i Hawai'i, Board of genealogy, was established in 1880. The goal of this organisation, besides collecting genealogies was also collecting of chants, Hawaiian history and kapu customs of the high chiefs. Kapi'olani's older sister, Po'omaikelani, was appointed the president of Papa Kū'auhau. Because there were very few chiefs of royal rank left, the purpose of Papa Kū'auhau was mainly to identify and verify those lines that still might have a connection to the sacred chiefs of the past. "Those considered for high positions had to have genealogies that went back to the origin of the world; their genealogies were indistinguishable from traditional cosmologies."³⁹³ This project had not only academic, but also political purposes. The results of the Papa Kū'auhau's work reaffirmed the tradition and helped to "define the nation". As long as there were still high chiefs among the Hawaiians and they could be identified by genealogies, the political power could be held by them.³⁹⁴ In the course of research "no distinction is made between the historical and the legendary." All collected poetry was called "mele", whether a cosmology, genealogy or hula song. The mythical artefacts that the board collected were also considered a verification of histories and myths.³⁹⁵ The board did not rely on foreign sources to validate their results, but on native only. Silva believes that this research was meant to challenge the foreign historical accounts.³⁹⁶ The goal of this native research was to prove that Hawaiians actually had a history before the arrival of the foreigners.³⁹⁷

³⁹² Buck, p. 114-115

³⁹³ Silva 2004, p. 94

³⁹⁴ Silva 2004, p. 95

³⁹⁵ Silva 2004, p. 95-96

³⁹⁶ Silva 2004, p. 95

³⁹⁷ Silva 2004, p. 96

Beckwith mentions a similar idea of historical sources, according to her Hawaiians distinguished traditionally between fictional stories, called ka‘ao, and historical narratives called mo‘olelo. “Stories of the gods are moolelo.”³⁹⁸

Hale Nauā was established in 1886. This organisation too was based on native cosmology and included women on equal terms with men. Silva reminds that pono requires both female and male forces as opposed to Western cosmology: “in which male power is dependent on the exclusion of women from the centers of power”.³⁹⁹ Hale Nauā was a “secret society” loosely based on Masonic societies with which Kalākaua was fascinated. Kalākaua was himself Thirty-Third degree Mason in the Scottish Rite and a Knight Templar in the York⁴⁰⁰ The purpose of this society was to collect and study genealogies, Hawaiian lore and science. Many chiefly women were members and the majority of leaders were women.⁴⁰¹ Queen Lili‘uokalani translated Hale Nauā as Temple of Science.⁴⁰² Gavan Daws merely mentioned the Hale Nauā and according to him the “membership was limited to men with Hawaiian blood”.⁴⁰³

Official native scholarship emerged, independent of the foreigners and especially the missionaries. Silva wrote about publishing of Kumulipo:

“If Kalākaua and Papa Kū‘auhau o Nā Ali‘i had not done this work of collecting and recording the genealogies, such a consequential cosmological chant might never have been transcribed. Even in the 1880s there were few persons left with such knowledge.”⁴⁰⁴

According to Silva, Kumulipo obtained a deeper political significance besides being the genealogy that legitimised Kalākaua’s reign. As a cosmological chant narrating the origins of all Hawaiians, the Kumulipo “functioned doubly to legitimize the existence of

³⁹⁸ Beckwith 1976, p. 1

³⁹⁹ Silva 2004, p. 104-105

⁴⁰⁰ Allen 1994, p. 99

⁴⁰¹ Silva 2004, p. 104-105

⁴⁰² Lili‘uokalani 1990, p. 114

⁴⁰³ Daws 1974, p. 220

⁴⁰⁴ Silva 2004, p. 103

the nation itself”.⁴⁰⁵ Confirmation and validation of native knowledge was the main goal of Papa Kū‘auhau and Hale Nauā. La‘ila‘i was by the native historians treated as a historical person not the mythical mother of gods and humans, because the “myths” were history. Hale Nauā used La‘ila‘i’s birth as “year zero” from which the dates of later events were counted.⁴⁰⁶ As Kame‘eleihiwa stated, the genealogies are the Hawaiian concept of history.⁴⁰⁷ Kalākaua brought many elements of Hawaiian culture that were previously forbidden by the missionaries, back into the light. He ordered writing down of as many chants, histories and stories as possible, before the sources of native lore and traditions disappeared. “But the Papa Kū‘auhau, the Hale Nauā, as well as events such as the parade, historical tableaux, and hula performances, insisted on reinscribing and reenacting a history that is particularly Kanaka”⁴⁰⁸

The overthrow and annexation

In 1891 Kalākaua died and his sister, Lili‘uokalani, succeeded him on the throne. Hawaiian people had been petitioning Kalākaua for a new constitution ever since the Bayonet, now they turned to Lili‘uokalani.⁴⁰⁹ The new constitution would have denied foreigners the right to vote and restore the powers of the monarch.⁴¹⁰ According to Silva it was almost identical to the 1864 Constitution. The race, property and language requirements for voting were removed and the executive powers of the monarch restored. Lili‘uokalani’s constitution was meant as an amendment to the Bayonet Constitution to which she was forced to swear allegiance at her accession to the throne.⁴¹¹

Before the new constitution could have been proclaimed, a group of wealthy foreign businessmen, mostly the same men as those behind the Bayonet Constitution, conspired with the U.S. minister John L. Stevens and U.S. troops and overthrew the

⁴⁰⁵ Silva 2004, p. 92

⁴⁰⁶ Silva 2004, p. 103

⁴⁰⁷ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p. 19

⁴⁰⁸ Silva 2004, p. 121

⁴⁰⁹ Silva 2004, p. 129

⁴¹⁰ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p.315

⁴¹¹ Silva 2004, p. 167-168

monarchy in 1893. They formed a provisional government, under the lead of a missionary son Sanford B. Dole.⁴¹² Queen Lili‘uokalani ceded the kingdom under protest (just as Kauikeaouli had done before) and hoped that America would restore the sovereignty of the country (just as Britain had done in Kauikeaouli’s case).⁴¹³

Immediately after the coup, an organisation, Hui Hawai‘i Aloha ‘Āina was formed. The name has been later translated as Hawaiian Patriotic League, but “love of the land” in Hawaiian does not translate “patriotic” as Silva notes, “patriotic” is a gendered male word while “aloha ‘āina” is not.⁴¹⁴ The organisation was based on western structures, but it had both a men’s and women’s branch in accordance with native world view. As Silva stated, there was no reason why women should not participate in politics.⁴¹⁵

President Grover Cleveland did not approve the annexation treaty that was proposed by the provisional government and sent Commissioner James Blount to investigate the case. Hui Aloha ‘Āina prepared the testimony for the investigation and actively worked to restore the sovereignty of Hawaii.⁴¹⁶ As a sign of protest both men and women sewed quilts on which the Hawaiian flag figured prominently.⁴¹⁷ Many of these quilts are displayed in Bishop Museum today. The Royal Hawaiian Band refused to sign an oath of loyalty to the provisional government and lost their jobs. They formed Ka Bana Lāhui Hawai‘i (The Hawaiian national band) and travelled in the US “bringing their Hawaiian nationalist message to the common people through their music”.⁴¹⁸

As a response to Cleveland’s refusal to accept the annexation treaty, the provisional government decided to form a permanent government and held a constitutional convention. Only those who had signed an oath of loyalty to the coup-makers could vote in election of candidates for the convention. Of course the majority of

⁴¹² Silva 2004, p. 129-130

⁴¹³ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p.317

⁴¹⁴ Silva 2004, p. 130

⁴¹⁵ Silva 2004, p. 143

⁴¹⁶ Silva 2004, p. 130-131

⁴¹⁷ Silva 2004, p. 134

⁴¹⁸ Silva 2004, p. 134-135

Hawaiians declined the oath.⁴¹⁹ The women of Hui Aloha ‘Āina sent a statement of protest to foreign ministers of US, England, France, Germany, Portugal and Japan⁴²⁰ But in the end the U.S. recognised the new Republic of Hawaii instituted in 1894, despite the protests of the people and the Queen.⁴²¹ The Hawaiian people responded with an armed rebellion in 1895, but the uprisings were subdued and the Queen was imprisoned in her palace, charged with treason.⁴²² In 1898 Hawaii was annexed to America without an annexation treaty with the native people.

The controversy of the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy and the following annexation to United States is the most debated event of Hawaiian history to this day. The details of the argument concerning illegality of this act of colonialism are too overwhelming to be explored here. However, some of the strategies of the Queen must be mentioned. Foreign historians reporting the story of the overthrow have relied on English newspaper accounts as well memoirs written by Sanford B. Dole and the other coup-makers, these sources were very biased and they minimised the significance of the Hawaiian resistance and ridiculed the Queen.⁴²³ In these histories the Queen is presented as ineffective, despotic and child-like.⁴²⁴ Native sources tell a different history. The Queen put her faith in the law and worked only within its boundaries. She wrote appeals and protests showing that Hawaiians were civilised and understood the law.⁴²⁵ The Queen’s most appreciated act today is that she insisted that her people did not offer armed resistance to the U.S. troops so Hawaii could not be won in a war. Contemporary Hawaiian activists are still able to petition for reinstatement of their native government arguing the illegality of the sugar planters’ coup.⁴²⁶ The Queen wrote many articles for mainland newspapers and a book relating her view of the events. She travelled to Boston,

⁴¹⁹ Silva 2004, p. 136

⁴²⁰ Silva 2004, p. 136

⁴²¹ Silva 2004, p. 170-171

⁴²² Silva 2004, p. 180

⁴²³ Silva 2004, p. 165

⁴²⁴ Silva 2004, p. 166

⁴²⁵ Silva 2004, p. 173

⁴²⁶ Kame‘eleihiwa 2002, p. 16

Washington and New York making appearances with the high society in order to counter the propaganda of the coup-makers, who claimed that she was an immoral savage.⁴²⁷ She wrote in her book that:

“It may be true that they really believed us unfit to be trusted to administer the growing wealth of the Islands in a safe and proper way. But if we manifested any incompetency, it was in not foreseeing that *they* would be bound by no obligations, by honor, or by oath of allegiance, should an opportunity arise for seizing our country, and bringing it under the authority of the United States.”⁴²⁸

Hawaiian Ali‘i wāhine in modern world

Today the famous Hawaiian royal women are recalled in the names of hospitals, schools and charity organisations they helped to initiate. Lili‘uokalani was an active participant in Ka‘ahumanu Society, “an organization to preserve the old traditions and customs and especially to recognize the strength of womanhood.”⁴²⁹ She was concerned with the health and welfare of her people, and left all of her lands to The Queen Lili‘uokalani Children’s Center.⁴³⁰ Daws described Lili‘uokalani as having “a strong streak of unfeminine toughness, almost coarseness”.⁴³¹ This brings to mind the early descriptions of Hawaiian chiefesses by the explorers and missionaries. Although Daws’ sources on the subject of the Queen’s personality are unclear, since he provided no specific citations for his statement, we may assume that the idea of “unfeminine” qualities stems from Western accounts. Allen on the other hand described Lili‘uokalani as being both behind and ahead of her time as a “liberated woman”, drawing inspiration from Ka‘ahumanu as well as promoting equal rights for women “in both education and business” long before such ideas of emancipation emerged in the West.⁴³²

⁴²⁷ Silva 2004, p. 178-180

⁴²⁸ Lili‘uokalani 1990, p. 178

⁴²⁹ Allen 1982, p. 98

⁴³⁰ Kame‘eleihiwa 2002, p. 16

⁴³¹ Daws 1974, p. 264

⁴³² Allen 1982, p. 98

Princess Kaʻiulani was born in 1875, a daughter of Princess Likelike and Archibald Scott Cleghorn, and named heir to the throne by Queen Liliʻuokalani. She spent eight years in a school in England. She experienced the culturally alienating effects of the foreign education, she wrote to Liliʻuokalani: “I must confess that my knowledge of Hawaiian History is very limited”.⁴³³ Ironically, Kaʻiulani learned a lot about Hawaiian history and her genealogy from a book by “Prof. Alexander”⁴³⁴, a foreign scholar and ironically a missionary son. Victorian upper-class women were required to involve in charity and Kaʻiulani worried about having little time for such work as she was preoccupied with intense studying.⁴³⁵ The news of the overthrow reached Kaʻiulani while she was still in Europe. After receiving much confusing advice from everywhere, she decided to go to Washington herself and petition for the restoration of the monarchy. Whether Kaʻiulani’s visit with President Cleveland had any influence on the Washington is difficult to say, but A. C. Blount was sent to Hawaii shortly after to investigate the overthrow.⁴³⁶

Queen Emma, wife of Kamehameha IV (Alexander Liholiho), and later called the Dowager Queen who run with Kalākaua for the election and lost, was a great favourite among the commoners. Emma was pro-British in her politics, she was “devoted to the idea of medical care for her people”. She and her husband founded Queen’s hospital, “the first public medical facility in Hawaii”.⁴³⁷ The hospital provided free care to Hawaiians and was opposed by the missionaries who according to Kameʻeleihiwa believed that the sick Hawaiians “deserved to die for their sins”. Queen Emma worked to establish the Church of England in the islands.⁴³⁸

Queen Kapiʻolani, wife of Kalākaua, was a granddaughter of Kaumualiʻi (last king of Kauaʻi and Niʻihau). She established Kapiʻolani Maternity Home as part of her

⁴³³ Stassen-McLaughlin 1999, p. 27

⁴³⁴ Stassen-McLaughlin 1999, p. 28

⁴³⁵ Stassen-McLaughlin 1999, p. 29

⁴³⁶ Stassen-McLaughlin 1999, p. 35

⁴³⁷ Kameʻeleihiwa 2002, p. 14

⁴³⁸ Kameʻeleihiwa 2002, p. 14

husband's "Increase the Race" campaign. Kapi'olani's motto was Kūlia i ka Nu'u, "Strive for the Greatest Hights".⁴³⁹

Princess Ruth Ke'elikōlani was Ka'iulani's godmother. She was a great-granddaughter of Kamehameha, and was raised by Ka'ahumanu. She married Leleiohoku, the governor of the Big Island and inherited this position after his death. She is famous for her refusal to speak English and lack of fondness for Churches. She was a wealthy businesswoman and left her estates to Bernice Pauahi Bishop⁴⁴⁰

Bernice Pauahi Bishop used her inheritance for establishing the Kamehameha Schools for Hawaiian children, while her foreign husband established the Bishop Museum. She was chosen as a heir to the throne by Kamehameha V (Lota Kapuāiwa), but refused because she was supposedly afraid that her husband, an American businessman, would have too much influence.⁴⁴¹

Karina Kahananui Green wrote about the consequences of Western ideals forced on Hawaiian women's appearance and behaviour:

"A century of contact had changed the model Hawaiian woman from a mother, lover, and even warrior to a whisper of a woman, a delicate exotic flower..." and "...the beautiful and meek were deemed the winners, and the more native-looking and assertive were accounted losers."⁴⁴²

The royal women of the new generation, educated in Western schools (such as royal boarding school run by Juliette Cooke), were aware of the Western ideal of womanhood, both in terms of appearance and personality. According to Green, the women who fitted the foreign expectations were respected and accepted while those who looked "very Hawaiian" were not. As an example of this Green presents the case of Princess Ruth as opposed to Princess Ka'iulani. Princess Ruth was a large woman (6 feet/440 pounds). "The U.S. minister to Hawaii dismissed Princess Ruth as a "woman of no intelligence or ability"". This was of course far from true as the Princess was a cunning businesswoman.

⁴³⁹ Kame'eleihiwa 2002, p 15

⁴⁴⁰ Kame'eleihiwa 2002, p. 15

⁴⁴¹ Kame'eleihiwa 2002, p. 15

⁴⁴² Green 2002, p. 248

Still, her refusal to speak English or accept Christianity was often interpreted as an evidence of “savagery” by the foreigners.⁴⁴³ “Ruth may have extended traditional Hawaiian female power into her own age, but even she was not completely immune to Western ideals.”⁴⁴⁴ Princess Ka‘iulani on the other hand was slim and delicate. She was considered extremely beautiful by both the Hawaiians and foreigners. She was educated in England and had all the manners of a society lady and princess. According to Green the new generation of Hawaiian women were forced to choose between independence and “beauty” (beauty in foreign eyes). “Although Ruth was able to assert her power, she was unable to be taken seriously because of her imposing looks. Although Ka‘iulani was praised for her beauty, that beauty was the very trait that imprisoned her.”⁴⁴⁵ The foreign newspapers and magazines that wrote about Ka‘iulani, concentrated on her looks, fashion and manners, not her political mission after the overthrow of the monarchy.⁴⁴⁶ Hawaiian people were gradually losing their position in public affairs and politics until they eventually even lost their sovereignty. Although written about contemporary situation, Hereniko’s idea that Pacific Islanders negotiate their identities, as they are caught between the dominant culture of the West and the traditional elements of their native culture, fits well for the Hawaiian situation after the overthrow.⁴⁴⁷ In a changing environment, in which all Hawaiians, being suddenly a minority in their own islands, were forced to negotiate their nationhood and means of survival of their values; Hawaiian women too negotiated their new place and femininity in a society of strangers.

⁴⁴³ Green 2002, p. 244-245

⁴⁴⁴ Green 2002, p. 246

⁴⁴⁵ Green 2002, p. 247

⁴⁴⁶ Green 2002, p. 246

⁴⁴⁷ Hereniko 1994, p. 418-429

7. Hawaiians today

Tourism and Hawaiian culture

“Like eunuchs, they grace the shoreline of Waikīkī. Coconut palms without coconuts. Symbols of lost identities. Exotic images as a backdrop for semi-naked tourists lounging on the beach.” This is how Vilsoni Hereniko describes the reduction of the once useful and valuable tree to a mere harmless decoration.⁴⁴⁸ Hawaii today represents a legendary tourist destination. In 1959 Hawaii became the 50th state. Seven of the islands in the archipelago are easily accessible to visitors through the well-developed network of resorts and hotels. Compared to many other destinations in the Pacific, Hawaii is a safe and economical alternative for anyone eager to realise a “South Sea” fantasy. The mythical friendliness and hospitality of native people has been well incorporated in the strategies of the tourist industry. To the point of silliness, the customer is treated with a dose of hundreds of “aloha” and “mahalo”⁴⁴⁹, by clerks of various ethnicities, during a single day of shopping in Waikīkī. “Real” Hawaiian woodcrafts, usually made in South East Asia, plastic lei and various “exotic” products that are completely unrelated to the native culture provide souvenirs. Polynesian Cultural Center, a popular tourist attraction located on the northern side of Oahu, offers perhaps the most absurd product: “The South Pacific, now available in a convenient 42-acre size”.⁴⁵⁰

Values, traditions and identity

Hawaiians are forever branded with the presentations of the tourist industry and the histories, derogatory or romanticised, written about them and their homeland by foreigners. “Negative or positive stereotypes reduce islanders to two-dimensional figures, not fully human, resulting in the erosion of the self-esteem and dignity of the colonised.”⁴⁵¹ According to Kekuni Blaisdell, the term “Hawaiian” is today often used to refer to things that are not native Hawaiian and even “anti-Hawaiian”. He believes that

⁴⁴⁸ Hereniko 1994, p. 406

⁴⁴⁹ Mahalo = thank you, to thank

⁴⁵⁰ Advertisement in “This Week Oahu” pamphlet, May 30 - June 8, 2005, p. 8-9

⁴⁵¹ Hereniko 1994, p. 413

the conflict of values that Hawaiians experience between the native community oriented identity and Western competitive, individualistic culture, results in frustration, loss of self-confidence and pride, and eventually leads to self-destructing behaviour. Hawaiians have the shortest life expectancy and the highest rate of chronic life-style diseases of the whole population in the islands today.⁴⁵² “One important, devastating result of the invisibility of our ancestors in the history books is the impression left that Kanaka Maoli passively accepted all the harmful things done to them including the loss of land, language, and national sovereignty.” The historical writing and history teaching at schools reinforce the negative stereotypes of Hawaiians as lazy, incompetent and unable to organise. “Students’ only images of themselves and their people, then, are those portrayed from a foreign perspective, through foreign texts, in a colonial school system.”⁴⁵³

Another question of importance today is who the Hawaiians are. The definition of Native Hawaiian according to American law is someone with 50 percent or more of indigenous blood. Such legal “native status” is not necessarily how Hawaiians identify themselves.⁴⁵⁴ Linnekin’s research of self-ascribed identity in a rural, taro-growing community shows that Hawaiianness is “social rather than biological criteria” in everyday interactions.⁴⁵⁵ Behaviour that is considered Hawaiian, such as “generosity, gift giving, humility, observing symmetry in exchange” is opposed to the un-Hawaiian pretentiousness and “social climbing”.⁴⁵⁶ In the same community, Linnekin found out that genealogy knowledge is “elaborated horizontally rather than vertically” which strengthens the bonds between the members. “But the lack of precise knowledge of past lineal relationships makes for great flexibility in the present.” The community in this study is inclusive rather than exclusive, part-Hawaiians are always called Hawaiian in casual conversation.⁴⁵⁷ “The “What school you went?” question has its roots in the native

⁴⁵² Blaisdell 2002, p. 283-284

⁴⁵³ Kaulukukui and Silva 2003, p. 94, kanaka maoli = native people

⁴⁵⁴ Trask 1999, p. 104

⁴⁵⁵ Linnekin 1990 in “Cultural Identity...”, p. 154

⁴⁵⁶ Linnekin 1990 in “Cultural Identity...”, p. 156

⁴⁵⁷ Linnekin 1990 in “Cultural Identity...”, p. 155-156

Hawaiian way of identifying oneself by geography and genealogy”.⁴⁵⁸ People meeting socially for the first time may inquire each other which high school they graduated from. “This impulse to establish how we are related is critical to understanding of local culture and local literature. The question “What school you went” is rather than being a question that divides us, is fundamentally an effort to discover how we are connected.”⁴⁵⁹ Among the local people, Hawaiians and descendants of Asian and Portuguese plantation workers, the common language is Pidgin, also known as Hawaii Creole English. Pidgin is an important community-binder and has today a literary tradition on its own despite the fact that it has earlier been called both a “barbarous perversion of English” and a “savage dialect” by the agents of the dominant culture. “Pidgin serves to unify local culture and to critique the dominant one.”⁴⁶⁰

The attitudes are usually positive towards the syncretic development of Hawaiian culture today, especially within music. “Our cultural identities are therefore always in a state of becoming, a journey in which we never arrive; who we are is not a rock that is passed from generation to generation, fixed and unchanging.”⁴⁶¹ Because many of the Pacific Islanders are today Christian the “elements of local cultures that are being revived are therefore usually those reconcilable with Christian beliefs”. The result is a mix of ancient and modern elements, but these “new identities are valid and necessary, as Pacific Islanders continue to struggle towards self-determination in all spheres of their lives.”⁴⁶² Hawaiian music is especially noticeable arena of innovation and blending of various traditions. So-called hapa-haole music in 1930s combined Hawaiian music and contemporary popular music. Today, a style combining Jamaican reggae and contemporary Hawaiian music has emerged under the name of “Jawaiian”.⁴⁶³ To critics of such blending of traditions Martha Kaumakaokalani A‘oe Poepoe Hohu, a distinguished music teacher, responded that modern Hawaiian music is dependent on

⁴⁵⁸ Lum 1998, p. 11

⁴⁵⁹ Lum 1998, p. 12

⁴⁶⁰ Lum 1998, p. 13

⁴⁶¹ Hereniko 1994, p. 407

⁴⁶² Hereniko 1994, p. 416-417

⁴⁶³ Buck 1993, p. 160

instruments brought by foreigners such as the ukulele and guitar. She asked: “Who gets to define what Hawaiian music is? Like I said earlier, the missionaries brought choral singing to the islands, and we adopted it”. Her message is that: “As with other living cultures, the Hawaiian culture has always been and will continue to be in a state of evolution. The fact that culture changes is a sign of its vitality.”⁴⁶⁴

Hōkūle‘a and other reconstructed voyaging canoes together with the revival of ancient navigation techniques have become important symbols of modern Pacific Islander identity.⁴⁶⁵ Herb Kawainui Kāne emphasised the significance of the canoes when he wrote about settlement of the Pacific by Polynesians: “Their spaceship was the voyaging canoe”.⁴⁶⁶ Hōkūle‘a’s voyages, from 1975 and to this day, proved that Polynesians indeed were able to travel the Pacific as told in the myths and chants. They were able to navigate precisely enough to settle and travel in between islands. Hōkūle‘a showed that sailing against the trade winds was possible, which Thor Heyerdahl believed that it was not. Hōkūle‘a’s voyages confirmed native history, restored pride and debunked many of the Western historical illusions of Western naval superiority. Hōkūle‘a is Hawaiian, but also Pan-Pacific, the crew and the navigators are from all parts of the Pacific, the canoe serves to bind the ties between all islanders. Perhaps it is needless to mention that both men and women sail with Hōkūle‘a.⁴⁶⁷ When Kāne was once asked to create a sculpture that “would be a comprehensive interpretation of the entire society of Ancient Hawai‘i; one that would express the world view of those people, their premises about the natural universe, their level of technology, their science, their craftsmanship, their sense of space and time, their values, their aspirations, something of their social structure ...”, he answered that such sculpture already existed, it was Hōkūle‘a.⁴⁶⁸

The first launch of Hōkūle‘a was celebrated with Samoan style kava ceremony since the details of corresponding Hawaiian ‘awa customs were lost, but as Linnekin argues, in the context of voyaging revival “Hawaiians have recognised a broader,

⁴⁶⁴ Stewart 2002, p. 46, talking story with Auntie Martha Kaumakaokalani A‘oe Poepoe Hohu

⁴⁶⁵ Linnekin 1990 in “Cultural Identity...”, p. 167

⁴⁶⁶ Kane 1997, p. 8

⁴⁶⁷ Hōkūle‘a 2000

⁴⁶⁸ Kane, <http://herbkaneart.com/hokuleadetail.html>

Polynesian ethnicity.”⁴⁶⁹ The revival of traditions is often complicated by the fact that there are no living practitioners left and the solution is the borrowing from other Polynesian traditions. The significance of the practise is not undermined by this, according to Linnekin “the idea is the same”.⁴⁷⁰ She believes that culture is “rather like a story that is tailored and embellished in the process of transmission”. This active and creative transmission is what makes the culture true and living as opposed to: “False cultures – static and passively transmitted – are produced by tourist industries, by nationalists, and by scholars, both Western and indigenous.”⁴⁷¹ This idea is supported by Hereniko: “After all, cultural identity is process, not product.”⁴⁷²

While the blending of the elements of the various Pacific traditions is accepted and even encouraged, the appropriation of Hawaiian concepts for the use by the dominant culture is not seen as positive development. The Hawaiian kingdom’s motto was, as Silva put it “strangely or perversely”, made into a motto of the State of Hawaii with a different translation (“the life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness”). The origin of the motto was a speech given by Kauikeaouli (Kamehameha III) in 1843 when Hawaiian sovereignty had just been restored after the seizure by Paulet: “Ua mau ke ea o ka ‘āina i ka pono” (The sovereignty of the land has been continued because it is pono).⁴⁷³ Similarly, the commercialisation of the concept of aloha and reducing it to a “business transaction” by the tourist industry, is understood as “part of the much larger phenomenon of cheapening Hawaii.”⁴⁷⁴ Trask calls such process “prostitution” of Hawaiian culture: “Land is now called “real estate”, rather than “our mother”, Papa.”⁴⁷⁵ Sometimes native people are forced to share their cultural values with other ethnic and religious groups residing in Hawaii. Recently a Hindu group appropriated the Hawaiian phallic shaped healing stones in Wahiawā on Oahu as their own manifestation of Shiva.

⁴⁶⁹ Linnekin 1990 in “Cultural Identity...”, p. 160

⁴⁷⁰ Linnekin 1990 in “Cultural Identity...”, p. 161

⁴⁷¹ Linnekin 1990 in “Cultural Identity...”, p. 161

⁴⁷² Hereniko 1994, p. 407

⁴⁷³ Silva 2004, p. 37

⁴⁷⁴ Kanahele 2002, p. 208

⁴⁷⁵ Trask 1999, p. 143

They arranged building of a shrine encompassing the stones, where they gather regularly to worship.⁴⁷⁶ The most famous element of Hawaiian culture that has been usurped by the tourist industry, is hula. Just like the Waikīkī coconut trees without coconuts, the Hawaiian dance presented to the visitors is stripped of its ideological dimension and reduced to a kind of decorative entertainment. “The ideology of the dominant myth of Hawaii is evident in the practices that govern performance and the codes of audience etiquette. Hawaiian hula is allocated to hotels and tourists, European ballet to concert halls and elite audiences.”⁴⁷⁷

Diaspora

By the end of 1990s, more than 70 000 Hawaiians lived “off-island”, in mainland USA, compared to 138 742 in Hawaii.⁴⁷⁸ The migration out of the islands is mainly caused by economic factors.⁴⁷⁹ There were three particularly evident waves of out-migration. Many Hawaiians settled on the mainland after WWII. Hawaiians enlisted in the military service because of the promise of education and later stayed on the mainland. Their economic and social status became the same of the mainland middle class.⁴⁸⁰ Later, during 1970s, the other wave of migration to the mainland came as Hawaiians experienced problems with finding jobs in the islands. The tourist industry was saturated and it was impossible to acquire land for lease. Finally during 1990s high home prices, difficulty with finding even low-pay jobs, and still the same problem with land, forced another wave of out-migration.⁴⁸¹

The Hawaiian identity in diaspora is maintained and achieved differently than in the islands. For someone ethnically Hawaiian, but born and raised on the mainland or abroad, native values may seem unfamiliar. Hawaiians in diaspora link their off-island settlement with the overthrow of the monarchy. The colonialism is the reason they had to

⁴⁷⁶ Aquino2005, <http://starbulletin.com/2005/03/25/news/story2.html>

⁴⁷⁷ Buck 1993, p. 5

⁴⁷⁸ Halualani 2002, p. 211

⁴⁷⁹ Trask 1999, p. 145

⁴⁸⁰ Halualani 2002, p. 204

⁴⁸¹ Halualani 2002, p. 210-211

move despite the fact that the overthrow happened many years before the first wave of emigration.⁴⁸²

“Hawaiians have also reconfigured the nature of their identity across the globe in such way that a connection with the *‘āina* of Hawaii can be maintained and a claim of the indigeneity can be preserved. Hawaiian diasporic movement, which itself seems to contradict the notion of indigenous peoples, or those who are rooted in one’s ancestral land, is therefore transformed in the context of globalization into a culturally authentic act.”⁴⁸³

By the Hawaiians living in Hawaii the diaspora-Hawaiians are often considered “upper class” or “wannabe Americans” while living in the islands grants supposed cultural authenticity.⁴⁸⁴ *Pi‘ikoi*, to claim a higher rank than one has, a claim to genealogical link to the royal families, is practised widely by the diaspora community. Traditionally such behaviour was seen as something negative in Hawaii. Now by establishing a link to a “hero” from the past (preferably Kamehameha or Lili‘uokalani), diaspora Hawaiians feel more authentic.⁴⁸⁵ “*Pi‘ikoi* thus works to reestablish the political prestige and power stripped away from Western colonialism.”⁴⁸⁶

The Aloha Club serves as a Hawaiian community association on mainland U.S. Members may be either Hawaiian, have lived in the islands or have a special interest in Hawaiian culture (all that are “Hawaiian at heart”). “Thus, the Hawaiian community in the name of the Aloha Club resembles a multicultural, racially mixed grouping.” This multiculturalism is considered “natural” in the Hawaiian communities, the mythical inclusiveness of the Hawaiian culture is practised and perpetuated in this way.⁴⁸⁷ Still, members of the community distinguish between “real Hawaiians” (recognised by blood quantum) and “Hawaiians at heart” (spouses and friends of the native members).⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸² Halualani 2002, p. 216

⁴⁸³ Halualani 2002, p. 197

⁴⁸⁴ Halualani 2002, p. 211

⁴⁸⁵ Halualani 2002, p. 225-228

⁴⁸⁶ Halualani 2002, p. 226

⁴⁸⁷ Halualani 2002, p. 205

⁴⁸⁸ Halualani 2002, p. 242

“Ironically, difference in the Aloha Club is revised and negotiated in that membership as a Hawaiian is redrawn to include more than those who are racially, legally, and genealogically defined as Hawaiians.”⁴⁸⁹ According to Paul Spickard, Fredrik Barth’s ideas of ethnic boundaries do not work for Pacific Islander American ethnicity:

“The boundaries surrounding Pacific Islander American groups are not very important at all. Pacific Islander Americans have inclusive, not exclusive, ethnic identities. What is important for Pacific Islander American ethnicity is not boundaries but centers: ancestry, family, practise, place. If one qualifies for acceptance at the centers of ethnicity, than one is of that ethnic group, no matter to what other ethnic groups one may also belong.”⁴⁹⁰

Aloha Club activities include meetings and a luau every month as well as a larger event twice a year with performances of “fetishized images of Hawaiian royalty and tourism’s exotic female Hawaiian dancers”.⁴⁹¹ “The Aloha Club uses tourist images to gain dominant recognition as a Hawaiian community in the mainland and integrate mainland youth into privatized practice.”⁴⁹² Tahitian dances are mixed into the performances without making any strong distinctions from Hawaiian hula. “To the audience this is still Hawaii or Polynesia, the same difference. A generalized nativism steadily circulates within the mainland Hawaiian community”.⁴⁹³ The reason for the “tourist style” performances is the need of attracting the audience, in order to raise the club’s finances, but also to gain recognition in the wide public.⁴⁹⁴ These dance events also serve as a cultural reminder to the young generation growing away from Hawaii. Many children want to join hula halau⁴⁹⁵ only because they have seen a performance and it makes them curious about their ethnicity. Kumu hula⁴⁹⁶ serves as a teacher of culture,

⁴⁸⁹ Halualani 2002, p. 205

⁴⁹⁰ Spickard 2002, p. 53

⁴⁹¹ Halualani 2002, p. 216

⁴⁹² Halualani 2002, p. xxx (Introduction)

⁴⁹³ Halualani 2002, p. 217

⁴⁹⁴ Halualani 2002, p. 218

⁴⁹⁵ hula school

⁴⁹⁶ huka teacher

the students have to learn the history, native lore and practise Hawaiian language in addition to learning the show dances.⁴⁹⁷ “Our youth – our future – surprisingly become familiarized with cultural practise through the tourist popular.”⁴⁹⁸

Activism and revival

In rural areas some of the traditional practises, such as offering to fish deities are still alive. Many organisations have been formed to protect Hawaiian lands and sacred places from development, especially geothermal development of the active volcanoes. Hawaiian language has become a medium for cultural revival. In 1987 there were only 2000 native speakers of Hawaiian, now many language immersion schools and pre-schools.⁴⁹⁹ Māhū who were central in the survival of hula traditions underground, because the missionaries thought that dancing was “especially inappropriate for true males”, have also experienced a revived reverence.⁵⁰⁰

The island of Kaho‘olawe has been used by American Navy as a bombing-practise area. For almost twenty years the Hawaiians demonstrated and protested occasionally occupying the island. During the trials, Kaho‘olawe trespassers and activists used Hawaiian symbols to mark the opposition to the dominant power. “The gourd helmet took on a new meaning in this context as a sign of resistance and pride.”⁵⁰¹ The demonstrations were not in vain and the State eventually passed a decree that secured the island for “traditional Hawaiian uses”. “Kaho‘olawe became a sanctuary, a place where Hawaiians could be Hawaiian and revive and practise their religion far from judgmental eyes.”⁵⁰² The religious revival includes the worship of Lono during Makahiki. The Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana association, formed in 1976, was central in winning native rights to use Kaho‘olawe. This association conducts yearly Makahiki rituals, they build temples and hula platforms and they use traditional methods of land preservation. Their

⁴⁹⁷ Halualani 2002, p. 220-223

⁴⁹⁸ Halualani 2002, p. 224

⁴⁹⁹ McGregor 2002, p. 336-338

⁵⁰⁰ Robertson 2002, p. 264-265

⁵⁰¹ Trask 1999, p. 81

⁵⁰² Hartwell 2002, p. 322

Lono worship is interesting here, because they practise a kind of sex separation. Women participate in the construction of the temples and in the rituals, but only “mo‘o Lono, the men who devote themselves to the god Lono, conduct the formal ceremonies to the god.” Women perform their own rites in addition to (passive) participation in the Lono rituals.⁵⁰³

The Kaho‘olawe case, like many other cultural revival cases, has caused some controversy. The activists who claimed rights to the island, have been accused by non-Hawaiians of “inventing” the culture. According to Trask, such arguments that the sacred meaning of Kaho‘olawe is invented by the modern sovereignty movement, have been used against the Hawaiian activism, especially by US Navy as a justification of their possession of lands.⁵⁰⁴ But they have also met some resistance from the native communities, some believed that the association were “crazy activists and said kupuna would keep secret the traditional rituals in order to protect their children from the consequences of awakening old kapu.”⁵⁰⁵ The critics call the ‘Ohana association “weekend Lono worshippers”.⁵⁰⁶ Those who support the idea of revival have different opinions about the Kaho‘olawe worship. Some wish that the rituals were performed in a more traditional way. Some believe that women should be able to become mo‘o Lono as well. “For us who live in today’s society, we don’t have all the (ceremonial) answers.”⁵⁰⁷

Trask believes that politically neutral cultural revival is not helpful in “decolonizing the mind”.⁵⁰⁸ “Since the modern Hawaiian Movement began in 1970, land struggles have seemed, to many Hawaiians, a separate issue from cultural revival”, and although cultural revival generates pride, Trask’s question now is “how to move our people from pride to resistance”. She believes that there is still “a large distance between cultural people and political people”, because those who engage in cultural revival activities still lack “national consciousness”. “American myth of pluralism approves of

⁵⁰³ Hartwell 2002, p. 325

⁵⁰⁴ Trask 1999, p. 128-129

⁵⁰⁵ Hartwell 2002, p. 325, kupuna = grandparent, ancestor

⁵⁰⁶ Hartwell 2002, p. 328

⁵⁰⁷ Hartwell 2002, p. 327

⁵⁰⁸ Trask 1999, p. 90

cultural diversity as long as it remains apolitical” So hula schools and Hawaiian religion, do not threaten American hegemony unless attached to “Hawaiian national consciousness rather than American national consciousness”⁵⁰⁹ Not all understand the implications of sovereignty:

“they think sovereignty means going back to wearing malo. I say, Let’s look culturally and historically. Iolani Palace had electricity and running water before the White House. That tells us that our kupuna didn’t think that the way things were needed to be preserved. It is very cultural for us to incorporate technology and new practices.”⁵¹⁰

The sovereignty movements range between those who propagate a nation-within-nation model similar to native governments on the mainland and those who wish total independence from USA. Senator Daniel K. Akaka works for achievement of a federal bill to grant Hawaiians self-determination and political status as a nation-within-nation.⁵¹¹ This is not supported by those sovereignty organisations that wish for total independence and de-colonisation. The main argument against the now commonly called “Akaka bill”, is the illegality of the overthrow of Hawaiian monarchy and the following annexation.⁵¹²

Women are often leaders of the sovereignty and native rights organisations. Men on the other hand, often join state politics while women lead the voice of opposition. “Because American culture, like Western civilization generally, is patriarchal, that is, structured and justified by values that emphasize male dominance over women and nature, American institutions reward men and male-dominant behavior with positions of power.”⁵¹³ Trask believes that Hawaiian women are genealogically empowered to lead the nation because of Papahānaumoku: “Caring for the nation is, in Hawaiian belief, an extension of caring for the family, the large family that includes both our lands and our people.”⁵¹⁴ This is evident in a village founded by the activist Dennis “Bumpy”

⁵⁰⁹ Trask 2002, p. 258

⁵¹⁰ Ka’iwi 2003, Editors’ Note in ‘Ōiwi 3, p. 4

⁵¹¹ Donnelly 2000, <http://starbulletin.com/2000/03/20/special/index.html>

⁵¹² Donnelly 2000, <http://starbulletin.com/2000/03/20/special/index.html>

⁵¹³ Trask 1999, p. 92

⁵¹⁴ Trask 1999, p. 94

Kanahele, so-called “Bumpy’s town”, where the Hawaiians try to live accordingly with native values: “Village affairs are managed by four women — a “council of aunties” — who appoint responsibilities, hear grievances and settle disputes.”⁵¹⁵

Academic fields and feminism

Hawaiian feminists draw inspiration from their own culture rather than Western feminist ideas. Even if the interest in goddesses reminds of the similar trend in the West, still this difficult to compare. Hawaiian women seek genealogical connection to the divine female powers, which is a far more powerful affirmation than merely cultural connection.

Kame‘eleihiwa states that through genealogy Hawaiian women indeed are Haumea, the goddess of childbirth, politics and war.⁵¹⁶ This is especially interesting in terms of religion. Being a descendant of the goddesses and divine female ancestors does not stop one from practising Christianity or any other religion. Still, the reconstruction of the genealogies can prove challenging today because many matrilineal names have been lost due to the Western practise of tracing descent by the male lines only. “Naming has been, for many of us, a theft of matrilineal descent by Western patriarchal descent.”⁵¹⁷

Haunani-Kay Trask’s rejects the “white feminism”, she believes that: “culture is larger than “women’s rights””. And she states: “We have more in common, both in struggle and in controversy, with our men and with each other as indigenous women, than we do with white people.” Trask believes that white feminists fail to see the “oppression” of Hawaiian women as a product of colonialism.⁵¹⁸ From her point of view, “women’s issues” are very different in the native and foreign feminism. The sovereignty struggle might not seem as important to white feminists, to this Trask asks: “But why is land, our mother, not a woman’s issue?”⁵¹⁹ The Western family model as opposed to traditional Hawaiian extended family does not correspond with the native idea of feminism either: “In nuclear families, women’s power, as the power of the mother generally, is reduced

⁵¹⁵ Tizon 2005, <http://www.hawaii-nation.org/rebuilding-kingdom.html>

⁵¹⁶ Kame‘eleihiwa 2002, p. 7 and 22

⁵¹⁷ Trask 1999, p. 104

⁵¹⁸ Trask 2002, p. 254

⁵¹⁹ Trask 2002, p. 255

from life-giver to domestic servant.”⁵²⁰ Native women do not enjoy the same respect in the dominant society as the white women do, because the tourist industry images reduce Hawaiian women to “alluring, highly eroticized Natives” as part “commercialization” of the culture.⁵²¹

Trask argues with some degree of indignation that native voices have less value than foreign scholars’ statements. While the native people are accused of inventing their culture, non-native scholars are presenting “true facts”. “And the list of lies told by credible, professional academics about us Native Hawaiians goes on and on. Indeed, it could be said that anthropologists and archaeologists are inventing our culture at an unbelievable rate.”⁵²² Even more indignant on the next page, Trask states that: “anthropology and archaeology on Hawaiians should stop.” Although from the context it is clear that she means physical anthropology and research on the skeletons from burial sites, still cultural anthropologists should probably feel targeted as well as far as the “inventing of culture” is concerned. This relates of course to the question of “who has the right to speak” and the political agenda of research.⁵²³

⁵²⁰ Trask 1999, p. 105

⁵²¹ Trask 1999, p. 106

⁵²² Trask 1999, p. 130

⁵²³ Trask 1999, p. 131

8. Conclusions

Linnekin believes that genders in Hawaii were traditionally “socially equivalent and complementary”, a certain “parallelism in gender”.⁵²⁴ Before the arrival of European explorers it seems that Hawaiians were rather more preoccupied with rank than gender in their politics and daily life. There is no clear evidence that women holding political power were considered an exception to the existing gender relations in the society. The ideas of female inferiority and “inappropriateness” of female political activities were first introduced by the foreigners. Still the mystery of the ‘aikapu system remains. Originally considered universal in Hawaiian society, although there are hints that perhaps it was mainly practised by the ruling class, this custom is definitely an evidence that the Hawaiians were preoccupied with the sex differences in their religious practise. ‘Aikapu separated the sexes in their worship and ritual activities and to some extent designated separate work tasks for men and women. Still, there is little evidence that suggests that ‘aikapu in any way caused women to be considered inferior to men. Linnekin argues that ‘aikapu gave women a ritual disadvantage in matters directly connected with politics and religion, such as offering to male gods. But she concludes nevertheless that this disadvantage did not effectively restrain women from public and political activities.⁵²⁵ Ka‘ahumanu’s usurpation of power seems highly normative and certainly no exception in Hawaiian history according to Kame‘eleihiwa’s argument.⁵²⁶

During the last two centuries, Hawaiian values were put to a hard test. What originally was a foreign influence, gradually transformed into a dominant power. The introduction of trade and money economy as opposed to exchange and reciprocity ideology, disrupted the relationship between chiefs and commoners, and according to Sahlins eventually led to a secularisation of the kapu.⁵²⁷ The dramatic depopulation was perhaps the most significant factor in all changes that occurred in the native society. Kame‘eleihiwa believes that mass death was the main reason why Ka‘ahumanu and the

⁵²⁴ Linnekin 1990, p. 232

⁵²⁵ Linnekin 1990, p. 35

⁵²⁶ Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, p. 79-80

⁵²⁷ Sahlins 1981, p. 44-45

other chiefs eventually adopted Christianity.⁵²⁸ Already in the first years of the “missionary rule”, Hawaiians resisted the attempted devaluation of their culture. They petitioned to the king against allowing the foreigners citizenship and the rights to own land.⁵²⁹ Hawaiian newspapers became an arena for resistance both politically and culturally. Native values were expressed through published stories and chants. It is interesting that the missionary attempts to “domesticate” Hawaiian women, met such fierce opposition from the native society.⁵³⁰ Women maintained their high status even when the Western political system barred them from public participation in the government affairs. The organisation of the scholarly societies during Kalākaua’s reign is an example of this continuance of female leadership “underground”.⁵³¹ Just as hula, surfing and Makahiki games became symbolic acts of resistance⁵³², so it seems that the native gender structures were seen as one of the cultural values that should not be lost. To some degree, however, the “patriarchal codes” managed to penetrate the Hawaiian society. After all, women were excluded from the government positions before Hawaiians as a nation were excluded completely from ruling their own country. And the regime of Western beauty and femininity ideals silenced the assertive chiefesses such as Princess Ruth and Princess Kaʻiulani, although each in a different way.⁵³³

According to Linnekin Hawaiian women still succeeded in their resistance to Western devaluation.⁵³⁴ Even today, Hawaiian women frequently take on leadership roles as if it were the most natural thing to do. A brief look at Hawaiian history proves that Kameeleihiwa has a point saying that “in Hawaiian culture it is normal for women to run things”.⁵³⁵ Linnekin proposes a theory whether the indigenous gender ideology actually had an effect on Hawaiian State politics today, given that a large number of women of all

⁵²⁸ Kameʻeleihiwa 1992, p.145

⁵²⁹ Petitions of 1845, appendix in Kameʻeleihiwa 1992, p.331-333

⁵³⁰ Silva 2004, p. 83-84

⁵³¹ Silva 2004, p. 104-105

⁵³² Sahlins 1992, p. 73

⁵³³ Green 2002, p. 248

⁵³⁴ Linnekin 1990, p. 237

⁵³⁵ Walker 2005, <http://starbulletin.com/2005/09/25/news/index2.html>

ethnicities are quite active in the public spheres in Hawaii compared to the mainland USA. According to her they “are more active in politics in Hawaii and are more likely to be taken seriously as leaders in the public domain than are women in most mainland America.”⁵³⁶ Kame‘eleihiwa believes that modern Hawaiian women still find their strength in the genealogies:

“As Hawaiian women, we are the intellectual as well as physical descendants of our female ancestors, and in turn we will be ancestral inspiration for the generations to come. This is the Hawaiian and Polynesian way, and it is the heart of our cultural identity. Even where Hawaiian women have converted to Christianity, a religion that teaches female submission to male dominance, the inspiration of strong female ancestors lingers in our subconscious Hawaiian memory.”⁵³⁷

⁵³⁶ Linnekin 1990, p. 228

⁵³⁷ Kame‘eleihiwa 2002, p. 1

Glossary

The definitions are from the glossaries of Kame‘eleihiwa (1992) and Silva (2004) and from “Hawaiian Dictionary” by Pukui and Elbert (1986)

‘aha:	a religious ceremony – installation of Kū in the luakini
ahupua‘a:	land division sector extending from the uplands to the sea
‘aikapu:	sacred eating
‘āina:	land
‘ainoa:	free eating
akua:	deity, a powerful being, ghost, spirit
ali‘i:	chief or chiefess
ali‘i nui:	high chief or high chiefess
aloha:	love, affection and regard
‘aumakua:	personal akua, guardian spirit
hānai:	to feed, to support, adoption of a child
haole:	a foreigner, especially white foreigner
haumia:	defiling
heiau:	place of worship, a temple
‘imihaku:	to seek a new akua, ali‘i or source of power
kahuna:	priest, ritual expert
kahuna nui:	high priest
kalo:	taro
kanaka:	person, native Hawaiian person
Kanaloa:	akua of ocean travel
Kāne:	akua of fresh water and agriculture
kaona:	hidden meaning
kapa:	cloth made from wauke plant
kapu:	sacred, set apart, forbidden
kaukau ali‘i:	lesser chief
kinolau:	a multiple body form

kolohe:	mischievous
konohiki:	a land steward, to care for the land
Kū:	akua of war and politics
kuhina nui:	a principal advisor to the mō'ī
kumu:	source, source of knowledge - teacher
Kumulipo:	a cosmological genealogy
lāhui:	people, nation
Lono:	akua of fertility and agriculture
luakini heiau:	large heiau where the ruling chiefs prayed, place of human sacrifice
Māhele:	to share or divide equally
maka'āinana:	commoner
Makahiki:	festival dedicated to Lono
mālama:	to care, to preserve
malo:	loincloth
mō'ī:	ruler, monarch
mo'olelo:	history, legend, a narrative
nī'aupī'o:	incestuous mating practised among chiefs
pono:	good, righteous, perfect harmony of the universe
po'olua:	a child of double paternity
punalua:	several husbands of one wife or several wives of one husband
wahine:	woman, wife
wauke:	paper mulberry, the plant of which kapa is made

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